SUNDAY TIMES

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MAY 24, 2026 | METRO | PAGES 32 | INCLUDING BANGALORE TIMES

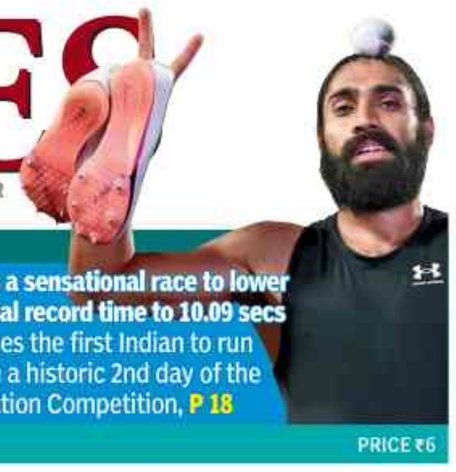
OF INDIA

Delhi HC permits wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in Asian Games 2026 selection trials, holding that motherhood cannot be treated as a 'disability' or a ground for exclusion from professional opportunities, P 18

Death toll from a Ukrainian drone strike on a student dorm in Russian-controlled Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine has risen to 18, with many of the victims young women, say Russian officials, P 16

India's Yuki Bhambri and his NZ partner Michael Venus finish runners-up at Geneva Open after losing 6-3, 6-7(7), 7-10 to Romain Arneodo of Monaco and Aus's Marc Polmans in a close contest that lasted nearly 2 hrs, P 18

Gurindervir Singh runs a sensational race to lower the men's 100m national record time to 10.09 secs while Vishal TK becomes the first Indian to run 400m below 45 secs on a historic 2nd day of the National Senior Federation Competition, P 18



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217 Indians joined Russian army, 49 dead, Centre tells SC

New Delhi: Union govt has told SC that as many as 217 Indians had joined Russian forces, of which 49 died and six are missing in action in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The govt said the Indian Embassy is making efforts to bring back the 139 people who have been released from military service, **reports Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

Representing MEA, additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati told a bench led by CJI Surya Kant that while Russia confirmed six Indians are missing, the status of 23 others remains unknown.

When relatives of some of these Indians serving in the Russian forces complained that the Indian govt was not helping with repatriation, Bhati said: "The Indian embassy remains in constant communication with Russia for verification and confirmation of the remaining cases of reported deaths and is actively assisting their return to India," she said.

▶Lured with perks, P 12

Deal or war 50-50, may take call today: Trump

US, Iran Both Signal Growing Convergence

US President Donald Trump Saturday said he was meeting with negotiators to discuss Iran's latest offer and would likely decide by Sunday whether to resume the war, US media outlet Axios reported. Trump told Axios it was a "solid 50/50": he would be able to make a "good" deal or "blow them to kingdom come".

In a phone interview to CBS, Trump said the US and Iran are "getting a lot closer" to an agreement. He said a final agreement would prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and would ensure Iran's enriched uranium would be "satisfactorily handled".

Both outlets reported that the US president would speak over phone on Saturday with leaders from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan.

Courtesy: X

US secy of state Marco Rubio met PM Modi on Saturday and delivered an invite from President Trump to visit the US 'in the near future' | P 5

In Delhi, at a reception hosted by US ambassador Sergio Gor, US secretary of state Marco Rubio said, "I don't have news for you at this very moment (on Iran talks), but there might be some news a little later today... I hope there will be but I'm not sure yet".

Iran said Saturday it was finalising a 14-point framework for a deal and signalled a convergence of views, "a trend towards rapprochement" with the US, while noting that gaps still remain. AGENCIES P 16

US is 2nd biggest FDI source for India

The US has emerged as the second largest source of foreign direct investment in India in the last financial year, overtaking Mauritius, while Singapore remained the top source. Equity investments from US more than doubled to over $11 billion in 2025-26. Computer hardware and software was the top draw, overtaking services. P 5

El Nino may crest this year, spare India's 2027 monsoon

Pune: Dark clouds hanging over India's 2027 monsoon may yet break apart before landfall. Meteorologists said a powerful El Nino brewing over Pacific waters is likely to peak late this year or during winter, then steadily lose punch before monsoon winds sweep across India next June — a reassuring sign for the country's farm economy and water security, **reports Neha Madaan.**

El Nino is a periodic warming of sea-surface temperatures across central and eastern Pacific Ocean that can disrupt global weather patterns. For India, it often spells weaker monsoon currents, patchy rain, crop stress and reservoir strain. Its opposite phase, La Nina, cools Pacific waters and boosts monsoon circulation, often bringing stronger seasonal downpour across subcontinent. Data from some strongest El Niño episodes since 1951 — including 1982-83, '97-98 & 2015-16 — shows a familiar arc.

▶Near-identical cycle, P 12

Only 6 states now have fertility rate above replacement level

Bihar Has Highest At 2.9%, Overall India Figure 1.9%

Rema Nagarajan & Shiva Rajora | TNN

India's total fertility rate (TFR), or the average number of children a woman would have, has fallen even further to 1.9 from 2.1, according to the latest sample registration system (SRS) report of 2024. Barring six states — Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, in that order — the TFR has fallen below the replacement level for all other states. Delhi (1.2) has the lowest, followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal with TFR of 1.3.

When TFR is 2.1, it is called replacement level because a woman having about 2.1 children over her lifetime would, on average, replace herself and her spouse. When fertility stays below this level over time, population growth slows and can eventually turn negative, depending on the population's age profile and gains in life expectancy.

A look at the percentage change in the one decade before the report shows that Bihar has seen the least reduction in TFR, a mere 9.4% reduction from a TFR of 3.2 in 2012-14 to 2.9 in 2022-24. Chhattisgarh and Assam too are two high-TFR states that have shown relatively lesser reduction of 11.5% and 13% reduction respectively. In the same period, Delhi and Tamil Nadu, which already had a very low TFR of 1.7, fell by 29.4% and 23.5% respectively.

States where the average number of children born to a woman fell below replacement level more than a decade back, also have the smallest proportion of the 0-14 age group in their total population. In Tamil Nadu the 0-14 age group is just 18% of population compared to 31.5% in Bihar. About one in four persons in India (24%) is in the 0-14 age group.

▶Working-age popn, P 12

DELHI HAS LOWEST TFR

	States	Rural	Urban	Total
HIGHEST 6	Bihar	3.0	2.3	2.9
	Uttar Pradesh	2.7	2.1	2.6
	Madhya Pradesh	2.6	1.8	2.4
	Rajasthan	2.4	2.1	2.3
	Chhattisgarh	2.4	1.6	2.2
	Jharkhand	2.3	1.7	2.2
LOWEST 3	Tamil Nadu	1.3	1.3	1.3
	West Bengal	1.4	1.1	1.3
	Delhi	**1.3**	**1.2**	**1.2**

Major Gen, 2 officers survive copter crash

Three Indian Army officers, including Major General Sachin Mehta, survived a Cheetah copter crash in Ladakh on May 20. A Lt Col and a Major were operating the HAL Cheetah. They exited the wreckage themselves but were injured. An inquiry is under way. The ageing Cheetah fleet faces safety scrutiny and will be replaced by LUHs. P 9

T'gana heatwave kills 16 in a day

Heatwave leas led to the death of 16 people across seven districts in Telangana Friday. The state issued a statewide alert as IMD warned severe conditions for three more days, with temperatures above 44°C in many areas. Govt announced ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each for victims' kin. P 7

'SOCIAL MEDIA GIVING KIDS THE SAME KICKS AS ADDICTIVE DRUGS': P 6

Truck mows down 4 outside UP house

Four members of a family, including three children, were killed, after a "speeding" dumper truck ran over them while they were sleeping outside their house due to a power outage in UP's Jhansa Saturday. TNN

Court ups jail terms of Azam Khan, son

A Rampur court enhanced prison sentences of SP leader Azam Khan and his son from 7 years to 10 years each in the fake PAN card case after the state appealed for stricter punishment. P 12

Govt orders Delhi Gymkhana to vacate by June 5

New Delhi: Central govt has ordered Delhi Gymkhana Club (DGC), one of the oldest clubs in India, which is located next to the PM's residence in Lutyens' Delhi, to hand over the premises by June 5 for "strengthening and securing of defence infrastructure and other vital public security purposes", **report Dipak Dash & Abhinav Garg**.

The L&DO, in its notice, said the club is located in a highly sensitive and strategic area of Delhi. "The land is essential to fulfil urgent institutional needs, governance infrastructure and public-interest projects, integrated with resumption of adjoining govt lands," it said. A DGC member said they plan to to seek relief from court.

▶Delhi's 'elite class', P 10

Fuel prices up 3rd time in 10 days, PSUs losing ₹13/ltr on petrol, ₹38 on diesel

Atul.Mathur@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Public sector oil companies raised petrol and diesel prices by nearly 90 paise per litre on Saturday, the third hike since May 15, as they sought to partly offset mounting losses from selling fuels below market rates amid a sharp rise in global crude prices.

But that still leaves them with an under-recovery of Rs 13 on every litre of petrol sold by them and Rs 38 a litre on diesel (both pre-tax) as global prices remain above the $100 a barrel mark. With this, the cumulative increase has reached just under Rs 5 a litre, still lower than hikes seen in many other parts of the world.

▶Continued on page 10

PETROL NOW ₹108.05/LTR

Petrol and diesel prices increased on May 15, 19 & 23

₹/Litre	Price (Bengaluru) Before May 15	Now	Change
Petrol	102.92	108.05	+5.13
Diesel	90.99	95.99	+5

Pressure mounts on states to lower VAT

The increase in pump prices has heightened pressure on states to lower VAT, which is as high as 30% in some states. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Bengal have among the highest pump prices. While the Centre has taken a hit through a reduction in excise duty, an official said, "the burden has to be shared, even if not equally." P 7

Twisha husband in 7-day custody; AIIMS docs in MP

A four-member AIIMS Delhi forensic team flew to Bhopal Saturday to conduct a fresh autopsy on Twisha Sharma, as per MP HC orders. Investigators are expected to seek clarity on age of wounds recorded on her body. Earlier in the day, her husband Samarth Singh was sent to seven-day police remand in the alleged dowry death case. P 5

Website pulled down, says Cockroach Janta Party

New Delhi: Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), the online satirical movement, claimed another setback Saturday after founder Abhijeet Dipke said the outfit's official website had been taken down by Centre, days after its main X handle was withheld in India following a legal demand.

However, till the filing of this report there had been no statement from Centre, and a counter-narrative trending on social media that Dipke was playing the "victim card" by taking down his own website. Dipke didn't respond to messages and DMs.

Dipke alleged that the website was pulled down after the movement rapidly gained traction among young users online and amid a petition drive over the NEET-UG paper leak. TNN

▶Can't hack movement, P 7

10-yr-old raped, killed in TN, Vijay vows swift probe

A day after a 10-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and murdered by a neighbour in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu CM Vijay announced a fast-track probe and severe punishment for the culprits amid outrage and protests. A 33-year-old neighbour was arrested after CCTV footage showed him luring the child away from the front of her house where she was playing. P 5

H-1B to 'maybe': Green Card dream runs into bureaucratic nightmare

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: For nearly a million Indian professionals who spent years believing hard work, due diligence, patience and an H-1B visa would eventually deliver the 'American dream', the Trump administration's latest immigration memo has landed like a deportation notice wrapped in bureaucratic prose.

On Friday, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services said most temporary visa holders seeking permanent residency will now be required to leave the US and apply for green cards from their home countries, instead of adjusting status while staying in America.

For Indians who make up the overwhelming majority of America's high-skilled visa workforce and account for the largest employment-based green card backlog, the implications are seismic. The nightmare scenario haunting families is simple: leave the US for visa processing and get trapped outside for months or years due to bureaucratic delays, denials or shifting policy interpretations.

▶Fear biz disruptions, P 16

America First visa for biz professionals

Visiting US secretary of state Marco Rubio said Washington is introducing a new 'America First' visa scheduling tool that prioritises business professionals contributing to trade, investment, and economic growth between the two countries. It comes as a broader push to upgrade how American consulates operate. TNN

Fruits of Labour: 2 Brit mayors are from one family in Rohtak

Two election wins in a county north of London last week set off celebrations in a modest two-storey house in a Haryana city north of Delhi, **reports Kritika Sharma**.

The Dahiyas in Rohtak's Sector 34 now have the rare, if not unique, distinction of having two family members elected as mayors in the United Kingdom.

Victories for Parveen Rani and her son Tushar Kumar, first-generation immigrants who gravitated to the Labour Party and found their path to political office in local community work, resonate beyond the Dahiya household, in a state where the twin social problems of female infanticide and a dangerous 'dunki' obsession remain prevalent.

▶Work with charities, P 6

India's 2nd-biggest stadium to come up near B'luru

Niranjan.Kaggere
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Bengaluru: In what is being billed as Bengaluru's biggest sporting infrastructure push in decades, Karnataka on Saturday launched work on a new international cricket stadium and integrated sports complex in Anekal taluk, near Bannerghatta National Park, around 24 km from the city centre.

▶Bengaluru's new cricket colossus, P 2

The Rs 943-crore project, spread across 75 acres and being developed by Karnataka Housing Board (KHB), will comprise a cricket stadium with a seating capacity of 80,000 spectators, making it India's second-largest sporting facility after Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, which has a capacity of 1,32,000 guests.

SPORTING PUSH FOR NAMMA OORU

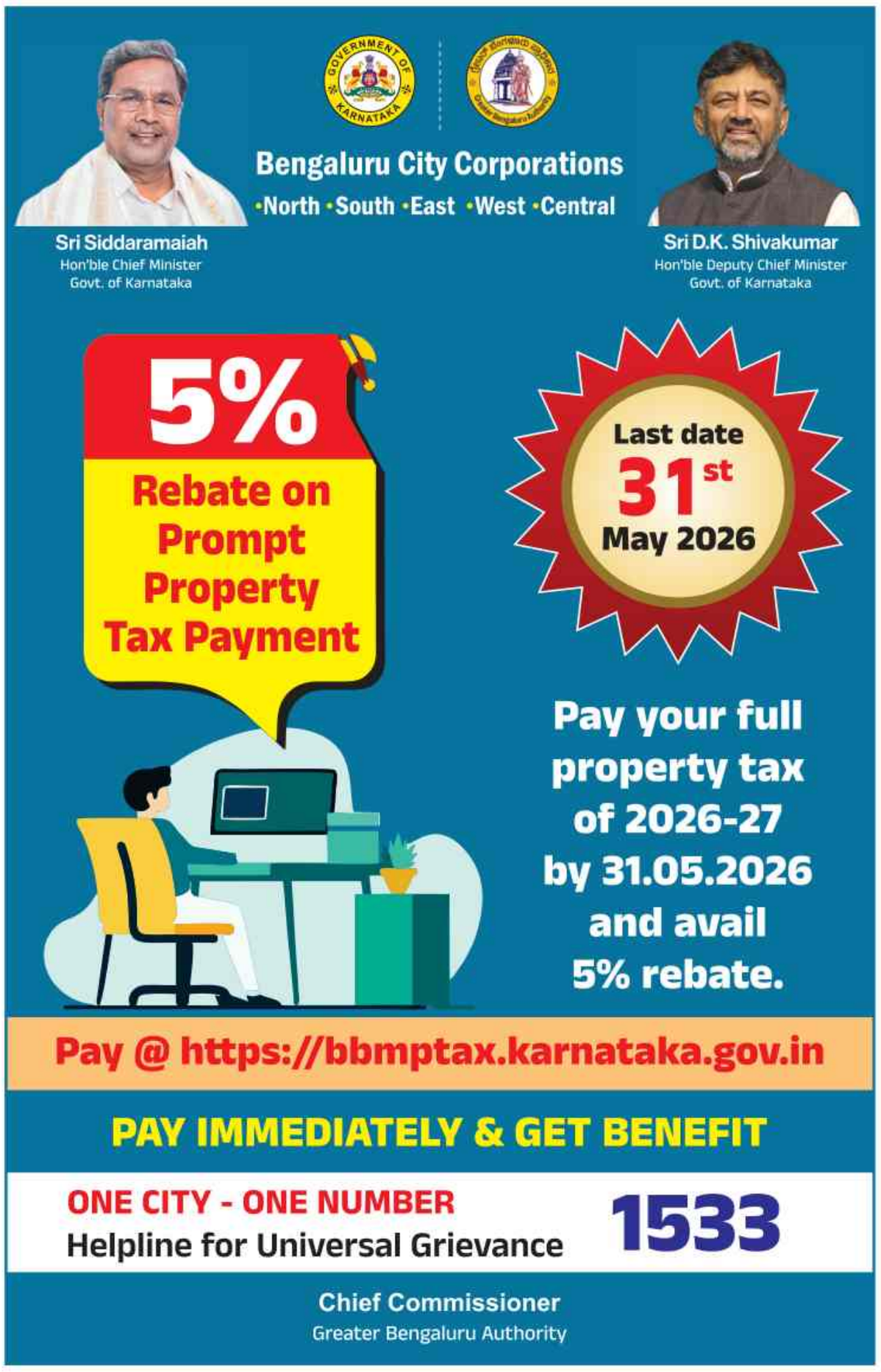
- ₹943-crore international cricket stadium **planned in Anekal**
- **80,000-seater venue** to be India's second largest
- Project spread across **75 acres near Bannerghatta**
- **Karnataka Housing Board** tasked with development
- Multi-sport complex **expected to be ready in two years**

An artist's impression of the upcoming cricket stadium

Apart from cricket, the venue is planned as a multi-disciplinary sports complex equipped with modern infrastructure, advanced training facilities and international-standard amenities designed to host global sporting events and nurture emerging talent.

CM Siddaramaiah and deputy CM D K Shivakumar laid the foundation stone for the proposed International Cricket Stadium and Sports Complex at Indlawadi village.

Shivakumar described the project as a transformative initiative that would reshape Bengaluru's sporting ecosystem and open new opportunities for aspiring athletes.



Bangalore Times

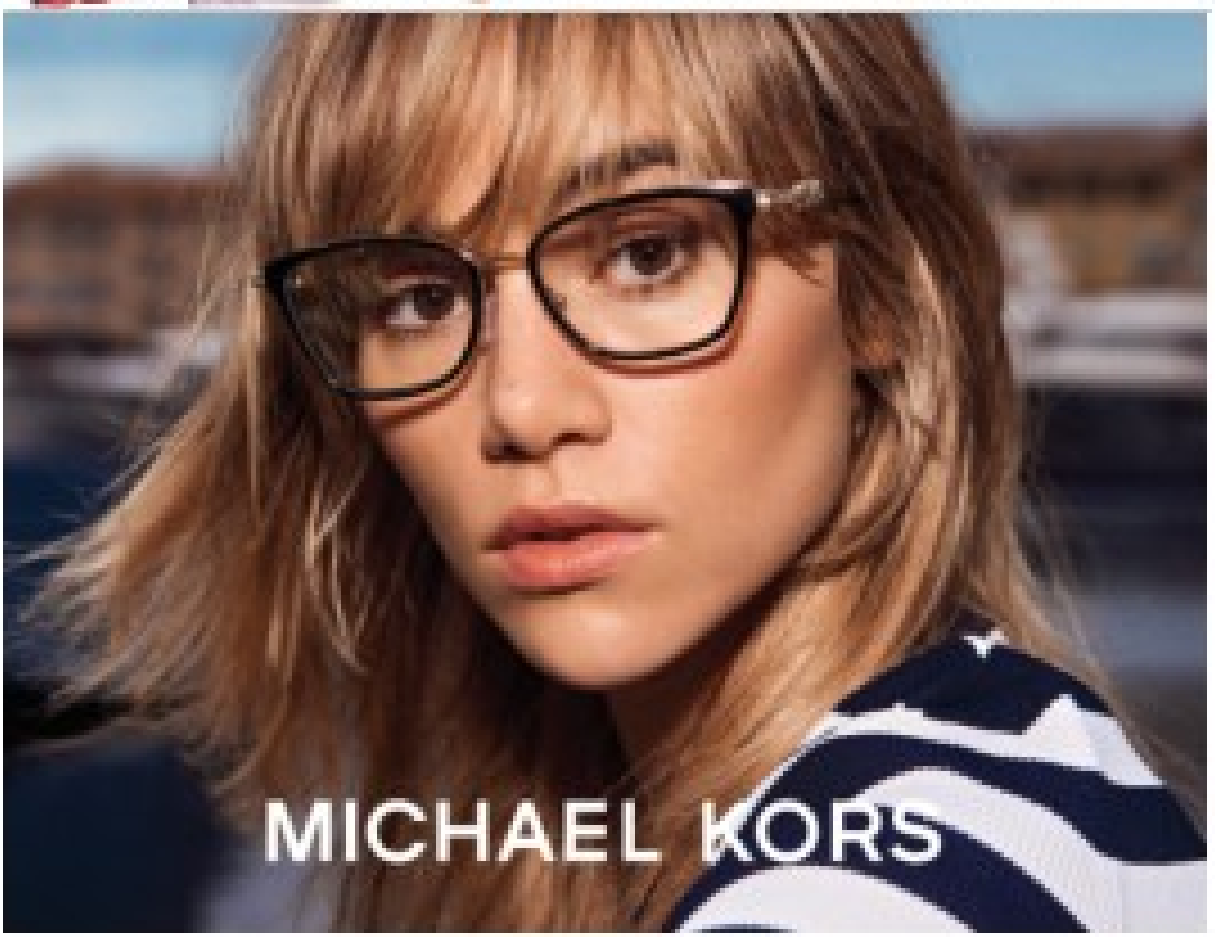
Sculpted in sapphire: Ash's Cannes comeback

After marital status row, 'will the' Aishwarya Rai Bachchan makes her much-anticipated Cannes return

This is a serious violation of privacy: Rukmini on deepfake

How to spot deepfake images

The cyber ecosystem needs stronger laws: Police



COMING SOON Despite Green Concerns, Govt Launches ₹943cr Stadium Project Near BNP; Promises Completion In 2 Years

Bengaluru's New Cricket Colossus

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Amid growing concerns over crowd management and infrastructure constraints at the city's iconic M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru is set for a major sporting infrastructure upgrade. Promising to build India's second-largest cricket stadium by seating capacity within two years, the state govt Saturday laid foundation stone for the proposed facility at Indlawadi village in Anekal taluk, near Bannerghatta National Park (BNP).

The International Cricket Stadium and Sports Complex, being developed by Karnataka Housing Board (KHB) on 75 acres at a cost of Rs 943 crore, will have a seating capacity of 80,000 spectators.

Despite the brewing controversy over the stadium's location within the original Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of BNP — an issue currently pending before the Supreme Court — chief minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar formally launched the project.

Kickstarting the work, Siddaramaiah said, "We have taken a step towards the comprehensive development of this region in terms of sports, tourism, job creation, and economic growth. KHB will fund this project entirely by mobilising funds from the auction of corner sites across Karnataka. These sites are expected to fetch Rs 20,000 crore. The govt will not spend anything on the work."

The CM also noted that land prices in the surrounding areas have risen sharply after the stadium announcement. "The property value in the vicinity, which was around Rs 1,500 per sqft earlier, has now gone up to Rs 5,000 per sqft," he said.

Calling the project the Congress govt's contribution to Bengaluru, Shivakumar said, "We should support those who have lost land and also provide good facilities to our sporting youngsters. This facility will not only decongest Bengaluru but also give a new dimension to this region's development."

KHB chairperson KM Shivalinge Gowda and Anekal MLA B Shivanna were also present during the event. Bengaluru Milk Union president DK Suresh, meanwhile, urged govt to build similar stadiums elsewhere in the city to decentralise sporting infrastructure.

Apart from the sports complex, the state also laid foundation stone for the Surya Shine and Surya Divine residential complexes, being developed at a cost of Rs 101 crore. The projects will feature G+5 and G+10 residential towers comprising more than 100 3-BHK apartments. According to officials, this is the first project by KHB under the 50:50 ratio, wherein 50% of the plots are reserved for landowners.

Pics: Artistic impressions

Project in a nutshell
Name: International Cricket Stadium & Sports Complex
Executed by: Karnataka Housing Board, GoK
Area: 75 acres
Location: Surya Nagar, Phase 4, Bengaluru (Indlawadi, Anekal)
Connectivity: NH-44, STRR, SH-87, SH-35, and helipad

Tendered cost ₹943.5cr
Total cost ₹1,241cr (including 18% GST)

Cricket Stadium — Seating capacity 80,000
- Player amenities
- Match official amenities
- VIP lounges, corporate boxes
- Spectator facilities
- Media lounge

Other facilities
Medical centre/fitness centre/hydrotherapy centre/nutrition centre/physiotherapy centre

Outdoor Sports
- Cricket practice ground
- Athletics track
- Football field
- Tennis courts
- Pickleball court
- Padel court

Aquatic Centre
- Changing rooms
- Shower rooms
- Locker room
- Toilets
- Diving pool
- Practice pools
- Olympic-size pool

Indoor Sports Complex
- Badminton/basketball/volleyball/handball/table tennis/fencing
- Judo, taekwondo, wrestling, weightlifting, kabaddi, kho-kho, squash

More amenities
Athletes' hostels (boys/girls)
Staff accommodation
Helipad
Multi-level car parking
Public plaza
Lake
Pro sports shops
Restaurant & retail shops

"This will be the second-largest cricket stadium in India after Gujarat. While the stadium in Ahmedabad can handle 90,000 spectators, this one will have a seating capacity of 80,000

BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan | HOUSING MINISTER

Real estate broker nabbed for attempted rape of 20-yr-old

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Madiwala police have arrested a real estate broker for allegedly attempting to rape a 20-year-old student following a complaint from the latter, who works part time at a restaurant.

According to the student, the accused allegedly stripped her and attempted to rape her on May 11 before her friends rescued her. The arrested has been identified as Hainas, 35, a native of Kerala. Anita (name changed), also from Kerala,said the incident took place around midnight. Anita, her employer, and a few other acquaintances had gathered for a party in a room behind the restaurant. The restaurant owner wanted to sell the eatery and had approached Hainas for brokerage.

The gathering was arranged after discussions related to the property sale. Later, when the complainant and Hainas stepped out to bring food, the latter allegedly tried to behave inappropriately while they were on the building's staircase. She complained to her employer, who asked both of them to return to the room. Anita felt dizzy and asked her employer to bring some food. When he and his friend stepped out, leaving Anita and Hainas behind in the room, she alleged that Hainas stripped her and himself naked before attempting to sexually assault her. Her employer and his friend returned and rescued her.

During interrogation, Hainas told police the restaurant owner assumed he had taken more commission, which led to disputes. He alleged the complaint was filed over this reason. He has been remanded in judicial custody.

CET allotment workshop to be held from May 25 to 30

Bengaluru: Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will conduct 'CET Seat Allotment Manthana' workshops across 65 govt engineering, medical, and dental colleges from May 25 to 30 to create awareness about the counselling and seat allotment.

AT 65 COLLEGES

KEA executive director H Prasanna said the workshops are aimed at helping students and parents avoid common mistakes during option entry and counselling, which often result in candidates losing seats in their preferred colleges despite securing good ranks.

Except on May 28, two sessions will be held daily — from 10am to noon and from 2pm to 4pm by trained resource persons from KEA. Students and parents interested in attending the workshops must book slots in advance through the KEA website. Prasanna said errors during option entry, including mistakes made at cyber centres and lack of awareness among candidates and parents, had led to several students missing out on desired seats in previous years. The workshop initiative, first introduced last year, received a positive response and has now been expanded and is being organised more systematically, he added.

During the sessions, participants will be guided on various aspects of the counselling process, including option entry, seat allotment procedures, acceptance of allotted seats, choices available for students seeking better colleges in subsequent rounds, fee payment and related formalities. TNN

Career focus: Educationists break down higher edu & smart choices

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

Hundreds of students at the threshold of higher education participated in **The Times of India**'s Mission Admission 2026, held at Jnana Jyoti Auditorium in central Bengaluru Saturday, to gain valuable insights before making one of the most important and career-shaping choices of their lives. Educationists, academicians and industry experts spoke to students, parents and teachers in panel discussions and presentations on the hot topics of higher education.

MISSION ADMISSION

Additional chief secretary to the department of medical education **Mohammed Mohsin**, who inaugurated the event, urged students to make use of the resources and guidance available now. He advised students to assess their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) before choosing their career paths. "Do not go behind fancy titles. Choose a career path according to your natural talents and understanding the schedules and style of functioning that the job demands."

"Studies show that just one notification on your mobile phone can ruin three minutes of your focus," he said, advising students to limit the use of gadgets. Mohsin also advised students to read newspapers for at least 30 minutes every day irrespective of the field they choose.

MAPPING THEIR FUTURE: Students, faculty members & parents at a session held during Mission Admission 2026 in Bengaluru Saturday

Pics: Syed Asif

KEA: No option of combined entry

Following the recent cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will be unable to go ahead with the combined option entry like it did every year, **Manjunatha R**, joint controller of exams and PRO, KEA, said at Mission Admission. "As we cannot wait for NEET results, we will start option entry for engineering and take up medical option entry later," he said. However, he assured students that there will still be a couple of rounds left by the time NEET results are out. "Students who have opted for engineering, but wish to switch to medical, might still be able to do so as the rounds will still be in progress," he said.

Become AI creators, not just users: Experts

The panel discussion on 'How industry-ready is engineering education in Karnataka' saw former director of International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore Prof **S Sadagopan** moderating a panel of four senior academicians in the field of engineering. Sadagopan advised students not to outsource decision-making to their parents, but to ask questions, explore, and engage in peer learning before making a choice. On the other hand, he urged parents to give their children space and avoid living their own dreams through their children.

With Artificial Intelligence (AI) being the buzzword in every field, experts at Mission Admission analysed how AI could be integrated into education, especially in the field of engineering. Students were advised not to see AI as a threat, but to treat it as an engineering collaborator.

Udayakumar Reddy, dean, school of engineering, Dayananda Sagar University, said: "Students need to move from being AI users to becoming builders of AI systems. Every student should learn to work with AI, know where it fails, and learn to evaluate it."

The principal of RV College of Engineering, **KN Subramanya**, responded to queries on changes to engineering curriculum in response to the advent of AI and changing industry needs. "Though we have new branches like AI and ML, core branches also need attention. By providing minors and other courses, we have enabled students across branches to be AI-educated. There is also an AI component in every course," he said, adding that problem statements from companies are introduced for students to solve and be industry-ready.

Kiran Kumari Patil, director of innovations and deputy director, CMR School of Engineering and Technology, said the AI framework is getting integrated in all streams. "Conventional streams are in for transformation. In future, we may start using terms like intelligent structures for civil engineering or intelligent systems for electrical and electronic branches."

Seshachalam D, professor and vice-principal (admin), BMS College of Engineering, termed AI a big disruption. "We must gear up for AI as it has penetrated every branch of engineering and even fields like medicine. IT has reached every field. Since AI has disrupted IT itself, it has also reached every field," he said.

Interdisciplinary learning & core courses

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Even as interdisciplinary learning is the trend of the day, strengthening one's core discipline is crucial, experts at Mission Admission 2026 said. They pointed out that a transdisciplinary approach should not replace core disciplines and that the ideal interdisciplinary approach is when learners are well-versed in their own discipline and can collaborate naturally with others.

A panel on 'Smart degree choices: How to match your degree with the current industry demand' saw five experts from varied disciplines share their insights on how the latest trends in education, especially in non-engineering fields, are demanding a different personality in professionals. The session was moderated by Nilisha Mohapatra, head of growth and partnerships at Teamlease, who successfully elicited unique views and insights from the panel.

Chanakya University professor **Nisshanth Kumar M** deliberated on the kind of worker that the current industrial setup needs. "The techno-humanist, who has the ability to interpret, contextualise, form judgments, and is culturally rooted, can manage to ride the tsunami of AI," he said. Kumar also underlined the opportunities in Indian languages.

Product management expert at BITS Pilani Digital, **Harold Fernandes**, emphasised the importance of AI education. "AI is not just technology, it is like literacy. It is now ubiquitous. Everyone needs to be educated to use AI at least as a tool," he said.

Dinesh Nilkant, provost, Presidency University, revealed that the revision of syllabi in universities is happening at a lower pace compared with changes in industry. "We must develop our capabilities of teaching AI and ML, and managements must invest in this," he said.

AV Arun Kumar, professor and director, IFIM institutions, pointed out that the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector is one of the top employers. He stressed the importance of continuing to acquire skills throughout one's career. "A simple degree is insufficient. What determines one's career today are the skills acquired and demonstrated continually," he said.

Harold Andrew Patrick, professor and director, Alliance University, said the choice of career path is about which fields are becoming future relevant, and not about which degrees are in demand. "As AI becomes more powerful, human-centric skills are becoming more crucial. Graduates in disciplines like psychology, economics, political science, public policy, and communication are being employed on a greater scale," he said.

COMEDK ASPECTS

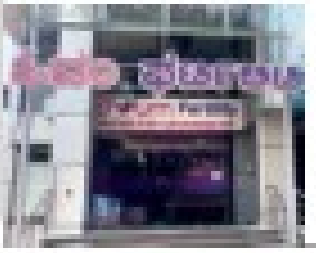
Joint secretary of ComedK Gururaj Bhat explained the features of the ComedK route to engineering and medical admissions. He said a total of 43,071 applications to ComedK 2026 were received from Karnataka-based students, and 87,549 from students outside the state. "Unlike CET, ComedK will not be considering 12th or PU exam scores in calculating ranks," he said. However, NEET will be the only basis for merit determination for medical and dental admission.

Last Entrepreneurship Batch Before Schools Reopen
ET
Young Mind Entrepreneurship Program
Batch Starts 6th June
Classes 6 & Above
Online Program 5-Week
Sessions Weekend
Certified from The Economic Times
Compete for ₹5 Lack Scholarship Pool
Project Showcase on ET Website
Startup Visit for Top Students
Pitch Idea at ET Soonicorn Summit
5-WEEK STRUCTURED LEARNING JOURNEY
> Problem & Idea Discovery
> Idea Validation & Selection
> Business Model Strategy
> Brand & Go-to-Market
> Financials & Investor Pitch
Limited-Seat Batch! Enrol Now
ET THE ECONOMIC TIMES
Build a Prototype, Pitch your idea, & grow as a leader.
Website:
http://toi.in/proto-pitch
WhatApp:
+91 93551 01276
SCAN FOR DETAILS
A TIMES INTERNET PRODUCT

UK still a top study destination in 2026

The vegan food glow-up

ASK THE EXPERT



Spotify, Universal team up for fan AI remixes

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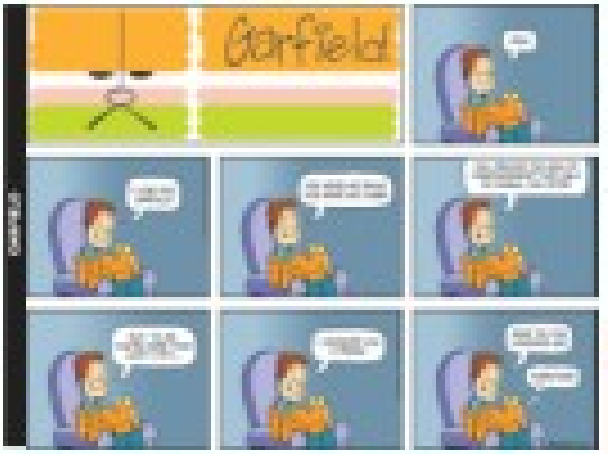
LEISURE



₹18k cr & 16 stns: K'taka's 1st inter-dist Metro takes shape

BMRCL Submits DPR to Govt On Extending Green Line To T'kuru

Suchith.Kidiyoor
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Bengaluru: BMRCL has submitted a detailed project report (DPR) for extending Namma Metro to Tumakuru. Once implemented, the network would become the state's first inter-district Metro corridor.

Sources said the DPR proposes two implementation models for the 60km corridor — one to be executed directly by BMRCL at an estimated cost of Rs 18,000 crore, and another under a public-private partnership (PPP) model at around Rs 20,000 crore.

The proposed Metro line will extend from Madavara (BIEC) Metro station, the current terminal of the Green Line, and pass through Nelamangala, Dabaspet and Kyathasandra before reaching Tumakuru.

An official said the corridor is planned with 16 stations, and the project is expected to reduce the travel time between Bengaluru and Tumakuru to one hour. After crossing Kyathasandra, there are proposals to build Metro stations at Tumakuru University, Siddaganga Medical College, Tumakuru Bus Stand and a terminal station at Sira Gate.

"When the feasibility report was submitted, there were proposals to build 25 stations on this line, and now it has been reduced to 16. The urban development department (UDD) will review the DPR, and if there are directions to further reduce the number of stations, we will have to do so. This will help in reducing travel time further."

"People are making comparisons with various other modes of transport. To make the corridor effective, the Metro should reach Tumakuru faster. When stations are located at a distance of 4-5km, the average speed of operations will obviously increase and thereby reduce travel time," the official said.

It is estimated that the corridor will have a ridership of 3 lakh per day.

The official said the Metro alignment has been planned to cater to residential and industrial pockets from Nelamangala and Dabaspet. At many locations, the elevated line will run parallel to the service road of Tumakuru Road (NH 48).

Home and Tumakuru district in-charge minister G Parameshwara told media persons that there has been a persistent effort to extend Namma Metro to Tumakuru.

He said the state govt is now considering implementing the project under a PPP model. "The DPR will be placed before the cabinet for discussion and necessary approvals, following which an expression of interest will be invited," the minister said.

A source in BMRCL said, "If the state govt decides to implement the project under the PPP model, additional land acquisition will be required for commercial development and revenue generation for the investor. The private concessionaire will also have to raise funds at prevailing market interest rates, which are significantly higher than the long-term external loans typically secured by BMRCL from multilateral funding agencies. Due to these and other financial factors, the overall project cost under the PPP model is Rs 2,000 crore higher compared to execution through a special purpose vehicle such as BMRCL."

Meanwhile, many people have objected to a Namma Metro extension to Tumakuru. Instead, they have suggested that the two cities should be connected through a regional rapid transit system (RRTS), suburban rail system or other cost-effective mass transit systems.

File pic

WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE

- Travel time between Tumakuru and Bengaluru expected to come down to one1 hour
- Metro line will pass through Nelamangala, Dobbaspet and Kyathasandra, with planned stations at Tumakuru University, Siddaganga Medical College and Tumakuru bus stand
- DPR estimates daily ridership at around 3 lakh passengers
- Officials say the number of proposed stations has been reduced from 25 to 16 to improve average train speed and cut travel time
- Under the PPP model, additional land acquisition may be required, increasing the project cost by nearly ₹2,000 crore

Honey trap: City bizman robbed of gold, scooter

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Bengaluru: Friendship with a masseuse proved costly for a 55-year-old electronics businessman from Yeshwanthpur. He was allegedly honey-trapped and robbed of valuables worth Rs 10.2 lakh by a gang recently.

According to the complaint filed by Suresh (name changed), the incident happened between 1.20pm and 1.50pm on Monday.

₹10 LAKH LOST

During his visit to an international spa in Malleswaram to get a body massage two months ago, he met a 28-year-old Ayesha alias Rafiza Khatun.

She claimed she was under financial stress and convinced Suresh to lend her Rs 5,000. Suresh and Ayesha remained in touch through phone calls and messages. On May 18, Ayesha allegedly called Suresh around 11am and told him she was leaving for Ahmedabad in Gujarat and wanted to return the borrowed money. She then shared a location in Amruthahalli on WhatsApp and asked him to come and meet her there.

Believing her, Suresh reached the apartment on 18th Cross around 1.20pm on his scooter. In the flat, he noticed another unidentified 26-year-old woman along with Ayesha. Suresh claimed that after entering the house, he spent 10 minutes talking to them. Three men aged between 25 and 35 years barged into the house. They shouted at Suresh and assaulted him before robbing him of his two gold chains, weighing 80 grams, a 40-gram bracelet, an iPhone 13, and the keys to his Honda Activa scooter.

Suresh claimed the gang of five, including Ayesha, confined him in the house and threatened him not to raise an alarm. All five walked out and escaped along with his scooter. The value of the stolen property is around Rs 10.2 lakh, he told police. A case has been registered at Amruthahally police station.

Cop's wife found dead, kin claim harassment

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

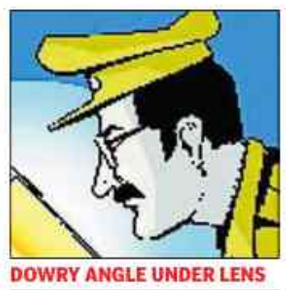
Bengaluru: A 26-year-old woman, wife of a police constable, died under suspicious circumstances at her residence in the KR Pura police quarters. Her family has accused her husband and in-laws of subjecting her to continuous mental and physical harassment after marriage.

The deceased has been identified as Lakshmi Priya. She was married to Rajesh Aradhya on May 11, 2023, in Mysuru. According to the complaint filed by her father, Priya was allegedly harassed by her husband, father-in-law Palaksharadhya, and mother-in-law Bhagyamma soon after the marriage.

Priya had delivered a baby girl eight months ago and had stayed at her parental home for nearly six months. On May 22, 2026, around 2.30 pm, Priya allegedly sent the password of her mobile phone through WhatsApp to her younger sister Jayashree, raising suspicion among family members. When the sister saw the messages and immediately tried to contact her, she did not answer the calls. Later, when they contacted her husband Rajesh, he informed them that Priya had killed herself by hanging.

Based on the primary investigation, police said the incident came to light when Rajesh returned home in the evening. He alerted police. Rajesh is attached to the HAL police station.

A case has been registered under BNS Sections 80(2) (dowry death) and 85 (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty), along with provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, against the husband and his family members.



DOWRY ANGLE UNDER LENS

Student on new bike dies in accident

Bengaluru: A 20-year-old BSc student riding home on his newly purchased bike died in an accident after a speeding mini goods vehicle knocked him down near Malathahalli bus stand in the wee hours of Saturday.

The deceased, Sushanth H Nayak, was a resident of Chandra Layout and a native of Shivamogga district. Nayak was studying in the second year of BSc at a private university on Mysuru Road.

Based on the primary investigation, police said Nayak was riding his KTM Duke bike, which his parents had bought a month ago. Nayak had been to his friend's house in Ullala.

When Nayak was riding near the Malathahalli BMTC bus stand, a mini goods vehicle, which was moving in the left lane of the road, suddenly took a right turn at the junction without giving an indicator. Nayak was riding in the opposite direction. The goods vehicle collided with his bike. Nayak sustained severe injuries to his chest and abdomen. TNN

Trading trouble: Ex-Air India official loses ₹2cr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A retired senior manager of Indian Airlines was duped of Rs 2.1 crore in an online stock market investment scam after she came across an advertisement on Facebook that promised huge returns.

LURE OF PROFIT

Suma (name changed), a resident of Benson Town, said she saw the advertisement in June 2025 and gave a missed call to the mobile number mentioned there.

Soon after, she began receiving calls from several international numbers. The callers introduced themselves as investment advisers and convinced her to download an app named "fxroad.com," claiming it was a professional trading platform that would generate high returns.

The fraudsters asked her to invest money through the app and regularly communicated with her via Telegram using an ID linked to "fxroad.com." Suma told police she was asked to transfer funds to several bank accounts given by the fraudsters.

Hoping to earn profits, she transferred over 2.1 crore in multiple transactions from her two accounts between June 2025 and May 2026. However, when she later tried to withdraw the supposed returns or contact the investment handlers, Suma realised she had been cheated.

Poilice said an investigation is ongoing.

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Fraudsters asked her to invest money through an app and she transferred over Rs 2.1 crore since June last year

Ambulance drivers too must exercise caution, says HC

Vasantha.Kumar
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Karnataka high court has upheld the conviction imposed upon an ambulance driver, emphasising that those of his profession also have to exercise necessary caution while driving on the road. However, considering the fact that the petitioner carried the victim to the hospital in his ambulance and was ready to pay enhanced compensation, the sentence has been modified.

Justice V Srishananda observed that since the petitioner was driving an ambulance, he was expected to move the vehicle swiftly and speed alone cannot determine negligence. However, as a professional driver, he was also required to exercise due caution to avoid accidents while driving at high speed, the judge said while upholding the conviction of Narendra, a resident of Sira town in Tumakuru district.

The accident occurred on Oct 6, 2014 at around 9.45pm along Ballari-Pavagada road, as the ambulance dashed against one Mehboob Sab, who was riding a motorcycle. He later succumbed to head injuries in hospital. In Dec 2021, the trial court in Pavagada held Narendra guilty under Section 304A and 279 of Indian Penal Code and imposed one-year simple imprisonment and two-month simple imprisonment, respectively, along with Rs 6,000 as fine. In Oct 2022, the sessions court confirmed this order, forcing Narendra to move the high court.

In his petition, Narendra argued that as an ambulance driver, he was required to move swiftly on the road and that speed alone could not be considered rash driving, since other motorists have a duty to give way to ambulances.

After perusing the materials on record, Justice Srishananda noted that while there is a duty cast on other motorists to give way for an ambulance, its driver also has to exercise caution. The judge further observed that drivers on the road often fail to show civic sense by giving way to ambulances, fire engines, or police vehicles, and some motorists even misuse the space created for emergency vehicles to speed through traffic themselves.

The judge observed that the petitioner had taken the injured man to hospital in the same ambulance and admitted him, instead of fleeing from the spot, which weighed in his favour and was treated as a mitigating circumstance. The court also took into account the petitioner's willingness to pay substantial compensation to the family of Mehboob Sab.

While upholding the conviction ordered by the magistrate and confirmed by the first appellate court, the judge reduced the sentence to one day's imprisonment.

Justice Srishananda said drivers often fail to show civic sense and some motorists even misuse the space created for emergency vehicles to speed through traffic

B'luru Climate Summit begins

Bengaluru: Bengaluru is set to witness one of its largest citizen-led climate initiatives with Saturday's launch of the Bengaluru Climate Summit – Alternative '26 (BCS) and the AI4BetterBLR Walkathon – organised by the VIMOVE Foundation ahead of World Environment Day 2026.

The summit aims to create measurable climate impact in Bengaluru through public participation, climate-tech innovation, youth engagement, and sustainable urban solutions. Organisers said the initiative seeks to bring together citizens, students, startups, corporates, artists, Resident Welfare Associations and government stakeholders to collectively work towards a greener and more future-ready city.

A key focus of the summit, organised in association with CMR Institute of Technology, Whitefield will be addressing Bengaluru's pressing urban challenges including water conservation, waste management, air pollution, mobility and climate awareness. The summit will feature a climate innovation expo, The main event of the summit, scheduled for June 4 and 5, is expected to see participation from over 10,000 attendees. TNN

My Vote, My Right: Civil society groups call for statewide protest against SIR

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Civil society groups and activists Saturday called for statewide protests on May 30 against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging that the exercise is anti-constitutional and poses a threat to parliamentary democracy.

Representatives of women's organisations, Left parties, trade unions, Dalit organisations, minority groups and civil rights activists participated in a round-table meeting titled "My Vote, My Right" held at Gandhi Bhavan in Bengaluru to discuss concerns surrounding the SIR exercise.

The Election Commission of India had announced on May 14 that Phase III of the SIR would be conducted in 16 states, including Karnataka. Participants at the meeting demanded that the exercise should not be implemented in Karnataka until the Supreme Court decides on the constitutional validity of the SIR and an independent audit of the revision conducted during Phases I and II is completed. They also urged chief minister Siddaramaiah to publicly address concerns over the exercise and take a clear stand against its implementation in the state.

Advocate and social activist Vinay Sreenivasa said: "Complex enumeration procedures, the use of 'logical discrepancy' criteria for deletion of names from electoral rolls and other opaque and exclusionary processes could result in large-scale disenfranchisement of vulnerable communities." He also demanded a public meeting involving the Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka, the state govt and civil society representatives to address concerns over the exercise.

Dalita Sangharsha Samithi state convener Mavalli Shankar alleged that the SIR exercise reflected the ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and was aimed at denying constitutional rights to marginalised communities. Participants also passed a resolution urging the state govt to organise special camps at gram panchayat and ward levels to issue essential documents such as caste and residence certificates free of cost through coordinated efforts of various departments.

Congress MLA BR Patil said the Congress had taken serious note of the far-reaching implications of the SIR exercise and that the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president has convened a meeting of MLAs and party office-bearers to discuss the future course of action. Women's rights activist KS Vimala said it's the govt's responsibility to establish help desks at GP level to ensure that no eligible voter's name is deleted from the rolls. She also urged the govt to make all required documents easily accessible to citizens.

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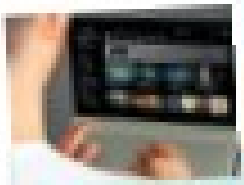
Has controversy become comedy's biggest marketing strategy?

POV

Bizarre

Man mistakenly orders 60 pairs of reading glasses online

Free but flawed: Pirated audiobooks flood YouTube



Artificial intelligence's role in audiobook piracy

Book exploring AI misinformation now faces a new AI controversy

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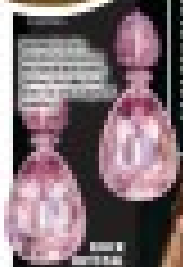
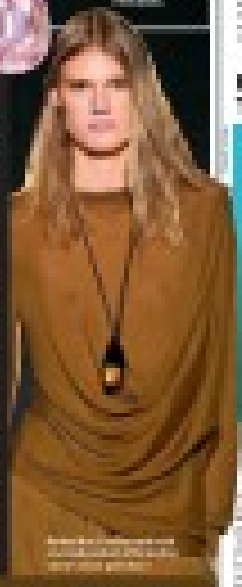
SCAN FOR LOCATION MAP

CASAGRAND building aspirations

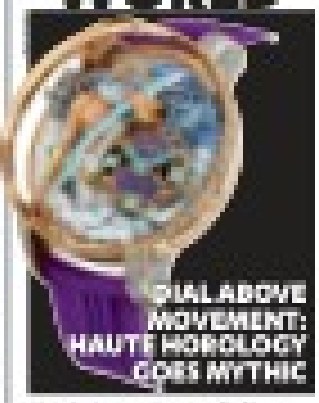
Shell, resin: Luxe jewellery expands its palette





Fashion's jelly fix evolves with sculptural twists

WINDOW TO THE WORLD



DIAL ABOVE MOVEMENT: HAUTE HOROLOGY GOES MYTHIC

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SHEIN BUYS EVERLANE: SUSTAINABILITY PIVOT OR BRAND IMAGE RESET?

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'Social media is giving children the same kind of addictive kicks as drugs'

In a conversation with TOI's Manash Gohain, *BJP MP and chairperson of parliamentary standing committee on communications and information technology,* Nishikant Dubey, *speaks on digital addiction, AI risks, fake news, cyber fraud, exam stress, online gaming, deepfakes and why India may need stronger digital guardrails for children and the youth. Excerpts:*

Students today face huge stress from fake paper leaks and rumours on Telegram and social media. How serious is this?

Just as countries impose age restrictions for alcohol or clubs, the world is beginning to realise that unrestricted social media exposure for minors also carries serious consequences. Across the world, there is now growing concern about screen dependency, shrinking attention spans and digital exhaustion

Your committee has spoken about KYC verification, age restrictions and AI regulation. Why did the committee feel these recommendations were necessary?

■ When we travelled across constituencies and interacted with people, one thing became very clear — uncontrolled digital exposure is becoming dangerous, especially for children and teenagers.

Look at online gaming. Children were secretly using parents' bank accounts, losing huge sums of money, and in some cases families were pushed to extreme distress and even suicidal situations. AI-generated advertisements and manipulative digital content are making these platforms even more addictive and difficult to regulate.

At the same time, India's laws were framed in a very different era. When the Press Council Act or Cable TV laws were made, nobody had imagined today's digital ecosystem where anyone can run a YouTube channel, Facebook channel or digital platform without accountability. A newspaper in print faces restrictions, but the same content online often escapes institutional oversight.

The committee felt there had to be some line somewhere. Countries across the world — including Australia, Singapore and parts of Europe — are already discussing or implementing age-based restrictions for children online.

Another concern was how AI is beginning to blur the line between fact and fabrication. I personally experienced a situation where fake material generated through digital platforms got mixed into a genuine discussion and compromised the credibility of the entire conversation.

Today, even courts are facing concerns over AI-generated fake references and fabricated judgments. The Chief Justice of India himself has repeatedly warned about blind dependence on AI tools in legal work. So naturally the concern becomes even bigger when it comes to children and students.

India's biggest strength is its youth population. If future generations drift away from reading, research and critical thinking, it will eventually affect innovation, productivity and the country's long-term growth ambitions.

LET'S D-STRESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA
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You used a striking comparison — social media is like drugs. Why do you say that?

■ Because it works like an addiction. Social media constantly gives psychological "kicks". After some time, children lose interest in studies, books, research and even normal human interaction.

I am not saying children should be completely cut off from technology. Phones are useful for libraries, online classes and learning. But social media is a different issue.

Today detox classes are being conducted globally teaching people how to stay away from phones. This problem is no longer limited to children — even adults and elderly people are addicted.

Just as countries impose age restrictions for alcohol or clubs, the world is beginning to realise that unrestricted social media exposure for minors also carries serious consequences. Across the world, there is now growing concern about screen dependency, shrinking attention spans and digital exhaustion.

Is artificial intelligence making misinformation and fake news worse?

■ Absolutely. AI is making fake content frighteningly believable. Recently, even courts faced situations where fake AI-generated legal references appeared in filings. Deepfakes can destroy reputations overnight. Fake screenshots, fake newspaper clippings and fake videos spread faster than truth.

The danger is not only political misinformation. It affects students, women, financial systems and public trust itself. Our parliamentary committee had also recommended stronger safeguards, AI literacy and structured regulation because India cannot leave these issues completely open-ended.

The problem is that technology is advancing much faster than social awareness and legal safeguards. That gap is becoming dangerous.

Are you worried AI tools could weaken students' learning habits?

■ Yes. Earlier, students and researchers had to read books, verify facts and spend time studying subjects deeply. Now many people simply depend on AI tools for instant answers.

The concern is not about technology itself. The concern is whether future generations stop developing critical thinking, research habits and patience.

You cannot build a knowledge economy only on shortcuts. Students still need curiosity, discipline and the ability to independently analyse information.

India's demographic dividend can become India's biggest strength, but only if young people remain productive, skilled and mentally focused.

TOI INTERVIEW

How serious is this?

■ Very serious. Many fake question papers circulate weeks before examinations. Students panic, families pay money, stress levels rise — and often the papers are fake.

This has become an organised ecosystem. Social media rumours can psychologically destabilise lakhs of students within hours.

We have seen how fake answer keys, manipulated screenshots and fabricated leak claims spread rapidly during competitive examinations. Even when papers are not leaked, rumours alone create fear and anxiety among students. That is why PM Narendra Modi's Pariksha Pe Charcha initiative is important. Students must learn not to fall into rumour traps or digital panic cycles.

The larger challenge is that fake information spreads far faster than official clarification. That creates an emotional pressure on students.

Which sections are most vulnerable to the darker side of social media?

■ Women, children and economically weaker users are among the biggest victims.

Fake videos, morphing, blackmail, pornography and cyber harassment can destroy lives. A fake clip going viral for even a few hours can permanently damage someone's reputation and mental health.

Children are also exposed to disturbing content very early. Without safeguards, the psychological impact can be severe. That is why digital safety can no longer be treated only as a tech issue — it is also a social and mental health issue.

The most harmful effects of unregulated digital platforms are often seen among those who are least equipped to protect themselves.

Your committee also pushed for KYC verification. Is that linked to cyber security?

■ Yes. India is witnessing massive cyber fraud through mule accounts and fake digital identities. Thousands of crores are being siphoned off.

Technology is advancing rapidly, but safeguards are not keeping pace. Earlier, opening a bank account involved community verification and accountability. Today, anonymity online has become extremely easy.

We are not against technology. We are asking: how do we make technology safer for society? If stronger verification systems are not introduced, cyber fraud, financial scams and identity misuse will continue to grow.

Do existing laws adequately protect citizens online?

■ There are serious gaps. Social media has evolved much faster than legal systems.

Stronger legal accountability may eventually become necessary in cases involving fake news, cyber fraud, child safety threats and national security concerns. Without deterrence and fear of punishment, organised digital misuse would continue to grow.

There is also a debate over whether certain legal provisions weakened after court judgments need to be revisited in the context of new-age digital threats. The challenge is to maintain the balance between freedom of expression and protection of citizens.

What should schools do immediately?

■ Digital literacy and AI literacy should begin very early. The parliamentary committee had recommended AI education from KG to PG.

Children must learn:

- how fake news spreads,
- how algorithms manipulate attention,
- cyber safety,
- responsible AI use,
- digital discipline, and
- mental health awareness linked to screen addiction.

Technology is like nuclear energy. It can heal cancer or destroy cities. Social media and AI are similar — they can empower society or damage it. The challenge is balance.

The focus should not only be on restricting technology, but also on teaching children how to use it responsibly.

Do you expect India to bring stronger social media regulations soon?

■ Discussions are happening continuously with ministries, states, platforms and stakeholders. Govt is actively examining child safety, AI-generated harm and misinformation concerns.

But I do not believe only in bans or restrictions. The real goal should be controlled, responsible and safe use of technology. The benefits of AI and social media are enormous. But where the negative impact is strongest — on children, students, women and vulnerable sections — society and govts must step in with safeguards. The objective should be balance: encourage innovation and digital growth, while protecting society from addiction, manipulation, fraud and psychological harm.

TOI shines at 57th ABBY Awards with multiple honours

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Panaji: The Times of India emerged with multiple honours at the 57th edition of the ABBY Awards held in Goa from May 20 to May 22, reaffirming the power of print-led storytelling and purpose-driven campaigns in a rapidly evolving media landscape. The festival received over 4,000 entries from more than 300 participating organisations spanning creative, media and publishing disciplines.

TOI's campaign 'Systematic Intelligence Plan' secured a gold in the Print: Corporate, Media, Entertainment & Others category. Drawing on the familiarity of SIPs or Systematic Investment Plans among young audiences, the campaign positioned newspaper reading as a daily investment in sharper thinking and informed decision-making. Through impactful print creatives and visual metaphors, the campaign addressed issues such as doomscrolling, fake news and echo chambers, while advocating mindful media consumption over endless scrolling.

In the Publisher ABBY category for Best Marketing of a Printed Newspaper/Edition, **TOI**'s 'I Am Kolkata, Amar Para' won Silver. The campaign celebrated Kolkata's neighbourhood culture by spotlighting the city's paras — hyperlocal communities that define its social and cultural identity. Combining evocative print storytelling with digital engagement, on-ground activations and community participation, the initiative encouraged Kolkatans to reconnect with the stories and spirit of their own neighbourhoods.

TOI also won bronze in the Sustainable Development Goals ABBY category for Diversity, Equality & Inclusion with 'Cancel Patriarchy'. In partnership with Khaitan & Co, the initiative offered women anonymous access to legal guidance on issues such as domestic violence, inheritance, child custody, workplace intimidation and dowry harassment through a dedicated online platform.

Another bronze came in the Print: FMCG — Personal Care, Home Care, Healthcare and Others category for 'Colours of India — Independence Day 2025', where a **TOI** jacket ad transformed the Asian Paints shade card into a tribute to the colours that unite India.

VC pursuing PhD at varsity she heads? Complaint filed

Shivani.Azad@timesofindia.com

Dehradun: A controversy has surfaced at the Forest Research Institute Deemed University (FRIDU), Dehradun, after a complaint was filed before the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) against vice-chancellor Richa Misra over alleged violations of rules and conflict-of-interest norms.

The complaint alleged that Misra, while serving as vice-chancellor of the institute, is also pursuing a PhD programme there. The complainant argued that such an arrangement violates University Grants Commission guidelines and may also amount to a breach of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968.

According to the complaint, UGC guidelines mandate that a vice-chancellor must avoid any conflict of interest as it goes against principles of academic fairness. The complaint further cited the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, which state that officers must not allow any conflict between private interests and public duties.

Misra, an Indian Forest Service officer of the West Bengal cadre, is registered for a PhD on 'Evaluation of Urban Green Areas of Dehradun' from Sept 1, 2022, to Aug 31, 2027.

The complaint also alleged that she took maternity leave during pre-PhD coursework from Nov 2, 2020, to April 30, 2021, instead of study leave.

It was Parveen's work with charities, especially during Covid, that earned her goodwill

▶ Continued from page 1

I feel bad when people tell me that I come from a state where women are not treated well, but I tell them to look at the examples of Gita and Babita Phogat. They are also women from Haryana. Look at all the medal-winning athletes, so many are from Haryana, Parveen (45) said in a phone conversation with this reporter from Hertfordshire, the county where she lives.

"I too want to be an inspiration to women back home through my work in the UK. I want to give them the confidence that they can do anything they want to," added Parveen, who moved to the UK in 2013 with her husband and two sons. Tushar was 10 then and her younger son Priyanshu 7. Immigrating was Parveen's decision. Growing up in a progressive family that, she says, gave her more opportunities to study and work than her brothers, she always had agency. But while working as a teacher here, she did not see enough opportunities for the family to chase all its dreams. She convinced her husband Sunil Kumar, who ran a property business, to move to the UK. Her in-laws supported the move. Parveen has been working as a teacher in the UK as well as volunteering with the Hindu Parishad and Brahma Kumaris in the UK. But it was her work with charities, especially during Covid, that earned her goodwill. It was former Labour Party Ealing Southall MP Virendra Sharma, who noticed her work and convinced her to join politics, Parveen said.

Parveen Rani (R) and son Tushar

CPM, BJP question naming of Kerala chief electoral officer as CM Satheesan's secretary

T'puram: Kerala govt's decision to appoint the state's chief electoral officer (CEO) Rathan U Kelkar as chief minister V D Satheesan's secretary has drawn fire from BJP and CPM, which accused Congress of adopting double standards, since Rahul Gandhi had criticised a similar move in Bengal. Taking a dig at Congress, K Surendran, BJP's former state president, posted on X: "When BJP appointed former West Bengal CEO Manoj Agarwal as chief secretary soon after the elections, Rahul Gandhi screamed that 'the bigger the theft the bigger the reward'. But exactly 10 days later, Congress govt led by V D Satheesan has appointed Kerala CEO Rathan Kelkar as secretary. So, Rahulji, what happens in Kerala is still 'reward for theft' or suddenly the 'beauty of democracy'?" TNN

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Burial of Ashes:
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at 3:00pm
SULOCO Winery & Farm Honsetthalli, near Mulbagal
Celebration of Life:
Sat, June 20, 2026
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Born: 05-09-1938 Expired : 22-01-2010
KBW Bricks Kodhandarama Nilaya, Doddanekkundhi Main Road, Bangalore-560 037
You were and always will be our light house – one who gave us hope with unwavered support, comfort and shelter in your warm hugs, charming smile and an amazing zest for life.
Your legacy will live on through the many lives you touched.
KOTE FAMILY N. S NAGARAJA REDDY, N.S. VASANTHAMMA & N. S NANDEESHA REDDY Ex-Chairman-BMTC (Ex-M.L.A., K.R.Pura, Bengaluru)
Grand Children, Great Grand Children & Relatives-Friends

In Memorium

When my feet shall not step
On this threshold,
When dust will gather
On my tanpura,
When my boat shall not anchor
On this shore,
No matter if you forget me,
No matter if you do not call out
My name to the stars.
I will come again and again
Garbed in the eternal spirit
Of the singer of songs.
- Rabindranath Tagore

D/o
Judge R.K. Mazumdar & Kiran Devi
Wife of
Dr Moni Moulik
Sister of
Bela, Rishikesh, Ramachandra
Mother of
Aloka, Achala, Amal
Mother in law of
Mohandas, Apratim
Grandmother of
Arjun and Arup

Leela Moulik
Author and Artist

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In Sacred Remembrance

Meera S. Kundapur
24-05-2019
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Your grace, your warmth and endearing love remain forever woven in to our hearts and memories
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Satish Kundapur, Rohan Kundapur, Rakshit Kundapur

'Growing up, summers meant eating mangoes'

FILM REVIEWS

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Amid fuel price hikes, states urged to cut VAT

Atul Mathur & Sidhartha | TNN

New Delhi: The increase in pump prices by around Rs 5 a litre is only a dent to under-recovery given that oil companies are still losing Rs 13 a litre on petrol and Rs 38 on diesel, without factoring in taxes, resulting in heightened pressure on the states to lower VAT, which is as high as 30% in some of the states.

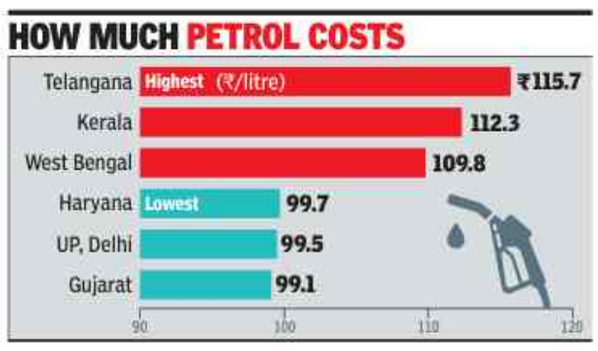
While the petroleum companies are losing money, Centre has already taken a hit through a reduction in excise, while the consumer is paying more to bear a part of the burden only to leave the states to part with a share of their revenue to ensure that the oil retailers are left with sufficient funds to meet their investment requirements and stay afloat.

"The consumers live in the states; the responsibility is not just with Centre's. The burden has to be split, even if it is not equally," said an official.

While those with the lowest VAT rates impose around 20% tax, there are states which go past the 30% level as taxes are layered with per-litre additions and infrastructure cesses. In the past NDA-governed states have responded by lowering state levies, though some of them still keep them higher than the average rates. But those such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal have among the highest pump prices, thanks to state taxes. Telangana and Kerala have the highest pump prices.

Although there have been discussions in the past on getting the two auto fuels on the GST platform, states, cutting across party lines, have resisted the transition, and they have good reason for it. Apart from state excise on liquor, VAT on fuel is the only major source of own tax revenue for them, with registration of property and automobiles being among other prominent avenues to mop up resources.

For the states, a bulk of the resources comes through a split of GST apart from getting a 41% share of all central taxes — be it central GST, income tax or customs — but they crib about the cesses and surcharges levied by Centre which stays with it.



IndianOil says no fuel shortage

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, on Saturday said there was no overall shortage of petrol and diesel in the country and described fuel outages reported at some retail outlets as "highly localised" and temporary. PTI

'You can hack and withhold accounts but you can't hack this movement'

▸ Continued from page 1

The govt has taken down our iconic website, he wrote, adding that "10 lakh cockroaches" had registered and "6 lakh cockroaches" had signed a petition seeking Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. In a second post, Dipke sharpened the attack on the BJP-led Centre, asking, "Why is the govt so scared of cockroaches?" He added that the episode was exposing India's youth to what he described as "dictatorial behaviour". The founder also claimed a wider digital clampdown. In another X post, he said the party's Instagram page, his personal Instagram account and a backup X handle had also been hit. "You can hack and withhold the accounts but you cannot hack this movement," Dipke wrote, insisting the campaign would continue online.

According to sources, the original CJP handle on X was withheld in India after the ministry of electronics and IT acted under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act on Intelligence Bureau inputs citing sovereignty and national security concerns. Neither X nor the ministries of home affairs and information technology made any official confirmation.

X's own policy says an "account withheld" notice reflects action taken in response to a valid legal demand or local law. The party soon launched a handle, Cockroach is Back, after the restriction. The viral, meme-driven movement emerged after controversy over remarks attributed to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, which triggered online outrage before he clarified that his comments were aimed at people using "fake and bogus degrees", not unemployed youth.

T'gana continues to sizzle, heatwave claims 16 in a day

Ajay.Tomar
@timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: At least 16 people reportedly died on Friday alone from heat-related causes across seven districts of Telangana, which is reeling under an intense heatwave.

The state govt has issued a statewide alert even as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned that severe heatwave conditions are likely to continue over the next three days. According to disaster management officials, four deaths were recorded in Jayashankar Bhupalpally, three each in Hanumakonda, Karimnagar, and Nizamabad, and one each in Jogulamba Gadwal, Rangareddy and Suryapet districts.

"With severe heatwave conditions persisting, we have intensified public health advisories and placed district administrations and disaster management teams on high alert," a department official said.

"Most of the reported heatwave-related deaths are not due to heatstroke alone, but are associated with pre-existing co-morbidities like diabetes and others, particularly among elderly people. However, the impact gets exaggerated when people step outdoors without adequate precautions. We are distributing ORS packets and creating awareness among the public. People must strictly follow heatwave advisories, stay hydrated, avoid unnecessary exposure during peak afternoon hours, and take preventive measures seriously," said Dr K Venkat Ramanna, district medical and health officer (DMHO), Jogulamba Gadwal.

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Milk Procurement Consultant	1	Max. 45 years	B. Tech (DT) / BVSc / PGDM/MBA preferably in Dairy Management / Agribusiness / Rural Management / Operations with minimum 10 years of relevant experience in dairy or any FMCG industry.
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Applications are invited for a Walk-in-Interview from eligible candidates who have passed PG/Ph.D/NET/SET in order to avail the services of full-time/part-time temporary Guest Faculties as per Rules of UGC and Karnataka State Universities Act-2000, to manage the additional workload of the undergraduate subjects for the academic year 2026-27, at Rani Channamma University's Sangolli Rayanna First Grade Constituent College, Belagavi. The candidates should compulsorily fill up their applications between **25-05-2026 to10-06-2026** using the Google Sheet available on the University's official website. Applicants must download the application format from the University's official website **www.rcub.ac.in** and attend the interview on the days to be specified according to different subjects along with 2 sets of their applications. The date and time of interview shall be announced on the University's official website later.

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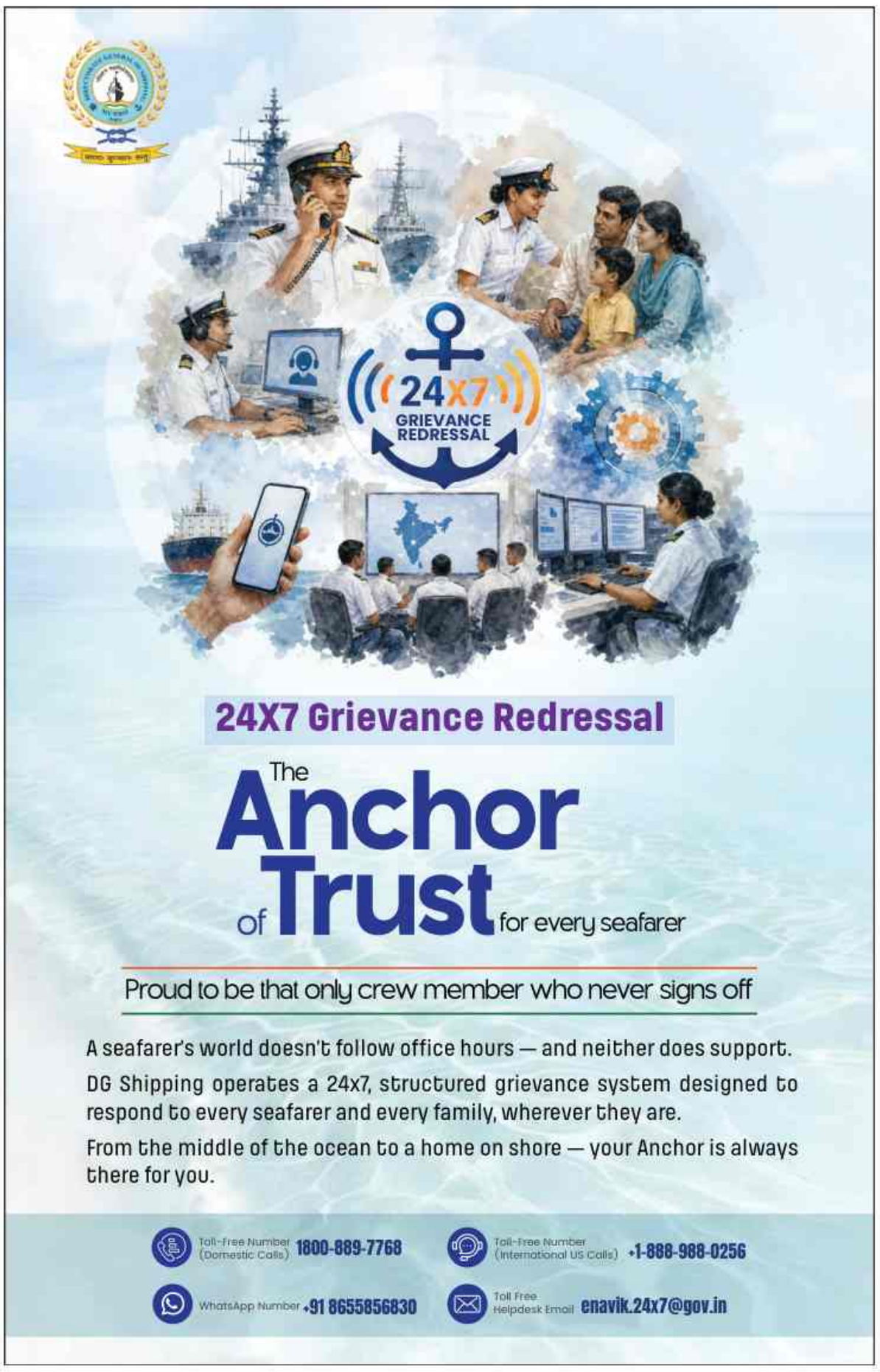
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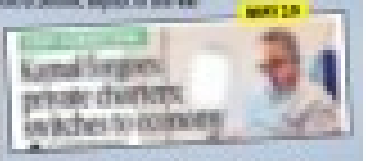
Bangalore Times

Kamal Haasan appeals for energy saving

After calling for urgent fuel-correction measures within the Indian film industry amid the ongoing West Asia conflict, the actor in a video note has now urged Tamil citizens and governments to prepare for the economic impact of the war



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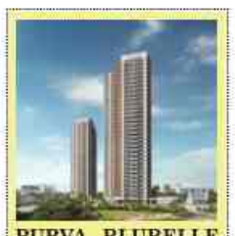

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RS polls: Cong juggles caste-gender equation; BJP faces coalition test

Ruling Party May Pick Lingayat Figure To Ensure Community Representation

ManuAiyappa.Kanathanda
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: With the Rajya Sabha election schedule already announced, political focus in Karnataka has shifted from electoral arithmetic to messaging behind candidate selection, particularly within Congress, where the allocation of three likely seats is expected to reflect caste equations, factional balance and the party's social outreach strategy

While Congress is comfortably placed to win three of the four seats going to polls on June 18, BJP is expected to retain one. But the elections have triggered intense lobbying and renewed discussions over leadership equations in both parties.

Political analyst Vishwas Shetty said Rajya Sabha nominations in Karnataka have historically been used by parties to send signals to influential communities and internal factions.

"This election is less about victory and more about political messaging. Congress has to balance caste representation, factional interests and gender concerns while also keeping national leadership preferences in mind," he said.

Photo for representation

TESTING TIME? The contest unfolds at a politically sensitive time for Congress amid continuing speculation over the power-sharing arrangement between chief minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar.

The election comes at a politically sensitive time for Congress amid continuing speculation over the power-sharing arrangement between chief minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar. Party insiders said the selection of candidates could become a test of influence between the two camps.

Retirements create 4 vacancies from K'taka

The retirement of Congress president and leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda of JD(S), and BJP MPs K Narayana and Iranna Kadadi has opened four vacancies from Karnataka.

Within Congress, one of the major discussions revolves around Lingayat representation. Sources said the party is seriously considering nominating a Lingayat figure as there has been no representation from the community in the Rajya Sabha from Congress in more than two decades.

Senior advocate Mohan V Katarki has emerged as one of the prominent names in circulation. His possible nomination is being viewed as an attempt to combine community representation with professional credentials.

Political strategist MB Maramkal said Congress could not afford to overlook caste equations ahead of future elections. "The Lingayat community remains politically influential across regions. Representation in Parliament has symbolic and organisational significance for Congress," he said.

Pressure to improve gender representation

Congress is also facing pressure to improve women's representation in the Upper House, with former Khanapur MLA and AICC spokesperson **Anjali Nimbalkar** emerging as a frontrunner.

Party leaders pointed out that women constitute only around 17% of the party's strength in the Rajya Sabha and that the last woman elected by Congress from Karnataka to the Upper House was Prema Cariappa in 2002.

"For 12 consecutive biennial elections, no woman was given representation to the Rajya Sabha by Congress. The party is under pressure to nominate a woman, especially after facing criticism over the women's reservation issue in Parliament," a senior Congress functionary said.

At the same time, leaders from backward communities are pressing for OBC representation, arguing that BK Hariprasad, elected in 2015, was the last OBC Congress MP from Karnataka to enter the Rajya Sabha.

Former Youth Congress president BV Srinivas is also being discussed as a possible nominee, while names from the national leadership, including Pawan Khera and Supriya Shrinate, continue to do the rounds.

Deve Gowda dilemma for BJP

BJP, despite being numerically positioned to win a seat, faces a coalition challenge over whether to accommodate ally JD(S) and former Prime Minister **HD Deve Gowda**, whose term is ending. JD(S) leaders said there has been no formal discussion yet on whether BJP would back Gowda for another term.

If he opts out of the race over health reasons, former CM DV Sadananda Gowda is being considered for the lone seat.

BJP keeps Nitin Nabin's Karnataka visit low key

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: With BJP national president **Nitin Nabin** undertaking his maiden trip to Karnataka after assuming office, the party has decided against holding a grand public reception or roadshow during the visit.

The BJP leadership has instructed the state unit to keep the programme simple in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's repeated appeals for fuel conservation and responsible use of petroleum products.

Party workers and leaders had initially planned a large welcome programme, but the central leadership reportedly stepped in and directed the Karnataka BJP unit to scale down the arrangements.

Sunday, Nabin is scheduled to attend a breakfast meeting at the residence of party veteran BS Yediyurappa. He will later offer prayers at the Kadu Malleshwara temple before proceeding to the state BJP office.

Nabin will preside over a state core committee meeting at 2pm.

In the evening, Nabin will preside over the valedictory of the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya BJP Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan of Bengaluru North district at Ramada Resort in Yelahanka. The two-day workshop will see participation of Bengaluru North district BJP office-bearers.

The visit comes at a crucial time for Karnataka BJP amid discussions over organisational restructuring and preparations for 2028 assembly polls.

Monday, senior state functionaries are expected to hold meetings with Nabin on leadership change and future political strategy in the state.

Cruiser-truck collision kills 5 of a family

Five members of a family were killed in an accident occurred between a cruiser and a truck on National Highway-150 near Wadi in Chittapur taluk, Kalaburgi district, late Friday night.

The deceased are Mohmad Hussain, 60, Fatima Abdul Saab, 40, Rasul Bee, 40, Mahbub Sangawi, 37, and cruiser driver Tolu Pasha, 24, all from Ingalagi village of Chittapur taluk. It is said that a man named Mahmud Abdul Saab suffered from paralysis during the night and eight people went in a cruiser to admit him to hospital in Yadgir.

When they were returning at 11.40pm, a head-on collision took place between a Tamil Nadu-registered truck and the cruiser near Ladkpur. Five occupants of the cruiser died on the spot. The bodies were shifted to Wadi Govt Community Health Centre.

Kalaburagi district minister Priyank Kharge has expressed his grief over the loss of precious lives on X. TNN

Surya: Bengaluru cannot be contractors' playground

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: "Do not dump more flyovers on Bengaluru without public consultations and putting the detailed project reports (DPRs) in the public domain," Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya told state govt and Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-Smile).

> **The high-speed elevated corridor at Ragigudda ends at a busy traffic signal near Aurobindo Junction, merely shifting the Silk Board traffic bottleneck further down the road and causing severe congestion during peak hours**
>
> **TEJASVI SURYA,** Bangalore South MP

His statement comes against the backdrop of B-Smile's move to float tenders for nine short and medium-length elevated corridors across the city at a cost of Rs 3,100 crore. Most of the proposed projects fall within the Bangalore South parliamentary constituency, and they warrant wider public discussion before implementation, Surya said.

In a letter to B-Smile director BS Pralhad (who was also responsible for the city's road infrastructure in the erstwhile BBMP) Saturday, Surya detailed an explanation on the rationale, technical feasibility and projected impact of the proposed projects, saying they are being pushed without transparency or public scrutiny.

The projects mentioned in the letter include an elevated corridor from Minerva Circle to Hudson Circle with a loop flyover to Town Hall, a 5.2km elevated corridor connecting Old Madras Road to Electronics City through Swami Vivekananda Metro station, Indiranagar, Old Airport Road, and Hosur Road up to Silk Board Junction at a cost of Rs 852 crore, and another 5.3km elevated corridor from Shoolay Circle to St John's Hospital Road via Anepalya and Adugodi Junctions at a cost of Rs 519 crore.

Surya pointed out that the projects have allegedly not received prior approval from the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA), which is empowered to review and clear major mobility projects in the city. In the absence of such scrutiny, he argued, it remained unclear whether the flyovers are backed by scientific traffic planning or would merely shift congestion from one junction to another.

Citing the example of the Ragigudda flyover, Surya said poorly planned elevated corridors could worsen bottlenecks instead of solving them. "The high-speed elevated corridor ends at a busy traffic signal near Aurobindo Junction, merely shifting the Central Silk Board traffic bottleneck further down the road and causing severe congestion during peak hours," he pointed out.

Surya also objected to the detailed project reports (DPRs) not being placed in the public domain despite the scale and long-term impact. "Bengaluru cannot be run like a contractors' playground," Surya added, insisting that public participation must form the basis of major infrastructure decisions in the city.

Two arrested in Coimbatore child rape-murder case

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Coimbatore: A 10-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and murdered by her neighbour in Coimbatore on Thursday night, triggering protests and widespread condemnation on Saturday as the news spread.

The child had gone missing around 5pm on Thursday while playing outside her house at Pallapalayam, where the family had moved just 20 days ago. After her parents told the police, a case was registered by 10 pm. Police formed five teams and started scanning footage from CCTV cameras in the area.

Around 6pm on Friday, police found the child's body near the Kannampalayam lake near Sulur. Meanwhile, they had zeroed in on a neighbour, 33-year-old K. Karthi, a native of Nagapattinam district, after footage showed he had lured the child away from the place.

Police traced Karthi to an apartment complex at Kannampalayam and nabbed him and a friend of his, R Mohan, 30, a resident of Bharathipuram, Pallapalayam, who had assisted Karthi in committing the crime. R V Ramya Bharathi, Inspector General of Police, West Zone, said, "We arrested both the accused within 24 hours of the complaint. A special police team surrounded an apartment complex in Kannampalayam where Karthi was hiding on the first floor. In an attempt to evade arrest, Karthi jumped from the first floor and sustained fractures to his right hand and right leg. He was subsequently apprehended by the special team."Police said Karthi admitted to luring the child, sexually assaulting her, and later murdering her in a nearby coconut grove close to Kannampalayam lake.

Rubio meets PM, delivers Trump invite to visit US in 'near future'

Modi: Resolve Conflicts Via Diplomacy

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New Delhi: After the roller coaster of the past 12 months, the US and India looked to steady the relationship with secretary of state Marco Rubio calling on PM Narendra Modi on Saturday and delivering an invitation from President Donald Trump to visit the US "in the near future".

According to a US readout, as the two sides discussed the situation in West Asia, Rubio emphasised that the US would not let Iran hold the global energy market hostage and affirmed that US energy products have the potential to diversify India's energy supply.

Speaking at a US embassy event later, Rubio, who will participate in the Quad foreign ministers' meeting on Tuesday, said that the India-US relationship is "at the cornerstone of our approach to the Indo-Pacific".

The announcement about the invitation was made by US ambassador Sergio Gor, who accompanied Rubio to what he described as a "productive" discussion with Modi on ways to deepen US-India cooperation across security, trade and critical technologies -- areas that strengthen "both our nations and advance a free and open Indo-Pacific".

PTI

Marco Rubio and wife Jeanette walk the red carpet before attending a reception at Roosevelt House inside the US embassy in New Delhi

While India is open to the idea of Modi travelling to the US, it's learnt that govt will wait to hear more from Washington about the likely scheduling of the visit. Modi is likely to travel to Florida in any case for G20 summit that the US will host in Dec this year. Officials were tight-lipped about what the invitation might mean for Quad summit for which Trump's presence in India is long awaited. The Indian readout or Modi himself didn't mention the invitation.

"Happy to receive the US Secretary of State, Mr. Marco Rubio. We discussed sustained progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and issues related to regional and global peace and security. India and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good," said Modi in a post on X.

"India is a vital partner to the United States," said Gor in a post on X after the meeting. Rubio said he also discussed energy and efforts to secure supply chains with Modi.

According to an Indian readout, Rubio also briefed Modi about the US' perspective on regional and global issues, including the situation in West Asia. It said that Modi reiterated India's consistent support for peace efforts and its call for peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. Rubio's visit is taking place amid hectic efforts to secure a US-Iran peace agreement and the threat of imminent American military action should these attempts fail.

The Indian readout also said that Rubio briefed Modi about the "sustained progress in bilateral cooperation" across a wide range of sectors, including defence, strategic technologies, trade and investment, energy security, connectivity, education and people-to-people ties.

Rubio began his India visit from Kolkata in the morning, before arriving in Delhi in time for the scheduled meeting with Modi in the afternoon. His bilateral meeting with external affairs minister S Jaishankar is scheduled for Sunday.

At the US embassy event, he recalled that his first assignment as secretary of state was a meeting of Quad foreign ministers. "And we were going to renew that. We wanted to do it here, not just because of our commitment to that structure of work, but also as a tangible sign of what an important role India plays in the United States, and in our posture, and in our approach to the Indo-Pacific," said Rubio, adding that this commitment was anchored in the relationship between Modi and Trump.

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'Can't hit kid's dignity to prove adultery': HC no to DNA test

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Shimla: Himachal Pradesh HC has rejected a plea for a DNA test in a matrimonial and paternity dispute, saying a child's dignity and identity cannot be jeopardised merely to satisfy allegations of infidelity. It said the man was free to prove his wife's alleged adulterous conduct using other evidence.

Justice Romesh Verma emphasised scientific tests could not be permitted as routine tools in marital litigation, especially when they risked stigmatising children. The HC upheld the order of a Chamba family court, which rejected an application filed by the petitioner seeking DNA tests of three children.

"Scrutiny, particularly when concerning matters of infidelity, can be harsh and can eviscerate a person's reputation and standing in society. Usually in cases concern-ing legitimacy; it is the child's dignity and privacy that have to be protected," the HC said.

Justice Verma observed Supreme Court had held that compelling a DNA test amounted to intrusion into an individual's private life.

The HC emphasised that under Section 112 of Evidence Act, there was a strong presumption regarding the legitimacy of children born during a valid marriage unless no access was conclusively established. Referring to several SC judgments, the HC held that DNA testing and can evisceerate a person's reputation and standing in society. Usually in cases concern-ing legitimacy; it is the child's dignity and privacy that have to be protected," the HC said.

Jawan's mother loses hand, ITBP staff protest hospital negligence in Kanpur

Kanpur: An ITBP jawan's mother, admitted to a private hospital in Kanpur for respiratory issues, had her hand amputated last Sunday because of infection caused during treatment. On Saturday morning, dozens of personnel of the border guarding force lay siege to Kanpur police commissionerate to protest alleged police inaction over the jawan's complaints of gross negligence against the hospital.

A tense atmosphere prevailed at the commissionerate after around 15 vehicles, carrying 60 ITBP officers and personnel, arrived and surrounded the premises. The ITBP personnel registered their protest with commissioner Raghubir Lal and ACP Vipin Kumar Tada, accusing district govt medical officers of shielding the doctors of the private hospital, and alleging police inaction over the aggrieved jawan's complaint. TNN

PM to flag off M'luru-B'luru VB next month: Somanna

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

A new Mangaluru-Bengaluru Vande Bharat service is all set to be rolled out next month.

Announcing this, Union minister of state for Railways V Somanna, who inspected Mangaluru Junction railway station Saturday, told reporters electrification work in the stretch has been completed. "Next month, the Prime Minister will flag off a few Vande Bharat Express trains. Among those is the Mangaluru-Bengaluru Vande Bharat," the minister said.

A feasibility study is also under way to develop a new railway station near Mangaluru international Airport, he added. He said the Mangaluru Subrahmanya Road passenger train has emerged a convenient option for a large section of passengers and the demand to convert it into a MEMU service is under consideration. The Mangaluru junction railway station is currently undergoing upgradation at a cost of Rs 38 crore. The renovated station will be formally opened in Oct.

The Mangaluru Junction Yard, with an additional freight track, will be developed at a cost of Rs 40 crore. Land for the yard has already been acquired, and the project is likely to be completed in March 2027.

New Railway Line

Somanna said the ministry has approved a new line on the Shivamogga–Sringeri-Mangaluru route at a cost of Rs 3,300 crore. Final location survey (FLS) has already been completed on the proposed 332 kms track, and tenders will be invited soon.

NEW TRACKS, BETTER CONNECTIVITY

Syed Asif

INFRASTRUCTURE BOOST: Passengers walk past the renovated Bengaluru East Railway Station ahead of its reopening to the public on May 25. The station has been redeveloped by South Western Railway as part of the Cantonment-Whitefield quadrupling project, which adds two additional tracks to strengthen suburban rail connectivity in east Bengaluru. The station had remained closed since March after platforms were dismantled to enable major track expansion works, disrupting several express, passenger, and Memu services. Officials say this is expected to ease congestion, improve punctuality, and enhance connectivity between Bengaluru Cantonment, Byappanahalli, and the IT corridor

US pushes Mauritius down to become 2nd largest source of FDI

CHANGE IN PECKING ORDER

SOURCE	2024-25	2025-26	% change
Singapore	14.9	19.8	32.9
US	5.5	11.2	103.6
Mauritius	8.3	6.6	-20.5
Japan	2.5	3.7	48.0
Netherlands	4.6	3.4	-26.1
SECTORS	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**% change**
Computer*	7.8	13.9	78.2
Services	9.3	10	7.5
Trading	4.2	4	-4.8
Renewables	4	3	-25.0
Food processing	0.5	3	500.0

*Software & hardware; Data in $ bn; Source: Govt

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New Delhi: The US has emerged as the second largest source of foreign direct investment into India during the last financial year, overtaking Mauritius.

Equity investments from the US more than doubled to over $11 billion in 2025-26 as companies chose to invest directly into India instead of routing funds through a tax-friendly jurisdiction as they had done in the past. Singapore remained the top source, registering a healthy increase. Japan saw a hefty increase thanks to large cheques in the financial services space.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal had recently said that American companies had committed investments of around $60 billion in recent months.

Since the amendment of the tax treaty with Mauritius, Singapore has emerged as the most preferred route for investments into India. During the last financial year, it accounted for around one-third of equity inflows. But tax havens are not being ignored by investors. Cayman Islands saw investments to India soar from $671 million in 2024-25 to $2.1 billion last year, although officials said it may be on account of a few investments.

There is also a change in the sectoral allocation of FDI. Last year saw computer hardware and software emerge as the top draw, overtaking services, a traditional favourite with overseas investors. That may partly have to do with the rush of investments in data centres. Food processing was another sector that saw an over five-fold jump in equity investments, with sea transport or shipping and related activities seeing a 30 times increase of nearly $2 billion in 2024-25. Goyal said govt was working on several proposals to promote investments. "We are continuously addressing challenges related to increasing self-reliance, particularly in areas where our supply chains are critically dependent on certain geographies," he said.

AIIMS Delhi team flies to Bhopal for second autopsy in Twisha case

Anuja Jaiswal & P Naveen | TNN

New Delhi/Bhopal: A four-member forensic team from AIIMS New Delhi flew to Bhopal on a state govt charter aircraft Saturday evening to conduct a fresh autopsy on model-turned-actor Twisha Sharma following orders from Madhya Pradesh HC, hours after her husband Samarth Singh was sent to seven-day police remand in the alleged dowry death case.

Twisha, 33-year-old daughter-in-law of retired Bhopal judge Giribala Singh, was found dead under suspicious circumstances in her marital home in Bhopal on May 12. Her family later challenged autopsy findings and sought an independent forensic review, alleging inconsistencies in investigation. "The body is currently at mortuary of AIIMS Bhopal. Our team will conduct post-mortem examination in the interest of justice," said Dr Sudhir Gupta, head of forensic medicine at AIIMS New Delhi.

He said forensic experts would also examine scene, ligature material and other medico-legal evidence linked to case. "Team will also interact with parents of deceased to address their grievances," Gupta said.

Earlier Saturday, police produced Samarth before a Bhopal court and sought seven days' custody for interrogation. ACP Rajneesh Kashyap, heading the SIT, told the court of judicial magistrate first class Anudita Gupta that the accused was allegedly not cooperating and insisted on speaking to his lawyer. Court granted police remand till May 29.

Investigators are expected to question him about his movements on the day of his newlywed wife's death, circumstances behind alleged disputes in marriage and allegations linked to medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) that police believe may have contributed to deterioration in relationship.

Commissioner Sanjay Kumar said SIT would examine where Samarth remained while on the run after Twisha's death and who may have helped him evade arrest. Police said his mobile phone would be sent for forensic tests to retrieve allegedly deleted material. Police plan to reconstruct crime scene and examine CCTV footage and DVR recordings seized from his home, including footage from week preceding Twisha's death.

Twisha's final phone calls and chats are expected to form crucial part of inquiry. Sources said investigators are focusing on what they described as possible "trigger point" when Twisha allegedly began sending distress messages to her mother describing suffocation, emotional trauma and harassment. Investigators are likely to compare timing of her messages with forensic findings from autopsy report, including reference to undergoing MTP a week before death.

Rare Himalayan turtle in C'garh reserve

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Raipur: Deep inside the forests of Chhattisgarh's Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve (UTSR), foresters stumbled upon a reptile usually associated with the Himalayan foothills — the rare Himalayan Tricarinate Hill Turtle.

The turtle's appearance is being viewed as a strong indicator of improving forest health

The discovery triggered excitement among wildlife researchers and foresters alike, primarily because the Tricarinate Hill Turtle is typically found in moist sub-Himalayan and northeastern forest ecosystems with perennial water sources. Its appearance in the Udanti Sitanadi landscape is being viewed as a strong indicator of improving forest health, undisturbed habitats and recovering ecological conditions.

Known for its distinctive three-ridged shell and secretive behaviour, the turtle is rarely spotted even within its conventional habitat. Wildlife experts believe the sighting points towards the existence of highly intact microhabitats hidden within the reserve's dense forest corridors.

USTR deputy director Varun Jain said the tiger reserve recently documented species like the rare Malabar pied hornbill, Indian giant flying squirrel, and smooth-coated otter — all heavily dependent on dense forests and minimal human disturbance.

Jain linked the resurgence partly to intensified protection measures across the reserve. According to the department, over 80 anti-poaching operations have been conducted in the last four years.

Gunfight breaks out in J&K during search operation

Jammu: An encounter broke out between security forces and terrorists on Saturday during a cordon and search operation launched in J&K's Rajouri following reports of suspected movement, officials said.

The operation, named 'Op Sheruwali', was on till report last came in, and reinforcements had been sent. A joint team of Army, J&K Police and CRPF launched extensive searches in the general area of Gambhir Mughla after specific intelligence inputs were received about the presence of two to three suspected terrorists in the area. TNN

STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

US consumers feel worse now than during 9/11 or Covid

American consumer sentiment has fallen to historic lows, finds a Michigan University survey. Rising cost of living and high fuel prices linked to Iran war have worsened anxiety over inflation and the economy

US consumer sentiment*

*Data as of May 22, 2026; The index is based on surveys of US citizens about their current finances and future expectations. Higher values indicate confidence, while lower values signal pessimism

Source: Matt Stiles, CNN

B'luru mountaineers carry K'taka's pride to top of Mount Everest

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Battling freezing winds, treacherous slopes and thinning oxygen levels, two mountaineers from Bengaluru scripted history atop Mount Everest by unfurling the Karnataka Emblem at the world's highest peak.

The duo — Santhosh Devarajappa, 40 and Chinmayee Thrishulamurthy, 45, reached the summit of Everest at 12.10pm IST on May 21 after a demanding climb through the traditional and popular southeast ridge (South Col) route from Nepal.

At an altitude of 29,031 feet (8,848.86 metres), Everest remains one of the toughest challenges for mountaineers due to its extreme weather conditions, thin air and dangerous terrain. "The climbers battled several odds during the expedition before finally reaching the summit after 46 days of preparation, travel and ascent," said S Srivatsa of the Karnataka Mountaineering Association (KMA), to which the duo belongs.

SCALING HIGH: Santhosh Devarajappa and Chinmayee Thrishulamurthy at the summit

"They are now at the base camp and have to deacclimatise. They are expected to return to Kathmandu in a couple of days. They had planned to attempt Everest in Oct to align with the 60th anniversary of our association," he said.

The expedition was flagged off by chief minister Siddaramaiah at Vidhana Soudha on March 9. The duo later left Bengaluru for Kathmandu on April 4 to begin the mission. The climbers also trained by scaling Lobuche East, a 20,075-ft peak in Nepal, on April 22 as part of their acclimatisation process.

Jail inmates take Vipassana route for transformation

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Bengaluru: For 10 days, 24 convicts lodged inside Parappana Agrahara Central Prison traded their daily prison routines for silence, meditation and introspection during a Vipassana programme, organised by police department from May 8 to 18.

The initiative, aimed at supporting the transformation and rehabilitation of prisoners, saw participants spend 10 days in isolation inside one of the prison halls, guided by trained staff members. "I used to work as a driver before. During that time, I had read about thinkers and spiritual leaders like Gautama Buddha, Osho and Ramana Maharshi," said one of the prisoners, who participated in the programme.

"Through Vipassana, I began to experience these ideas in a practical way. I became aware of the sensations within my body, learned how to sharpen my mind, and understood ways to reduce sadness and negativity within myself," he said.

For him, the experience was more than just meditation. "If we adopt these teachings in our lives, we can avoid making mistakes, live peacefully in society, and walk on the right path. In doing so, we can also inspire others to follow the same path," he said.

Another participant said the programme helped him realise the importance of controlling his thoughts and emotions. "By the third day, I was reminded of many things. I realised that if we want to truly smile, our body must be strong, and our mind must be pure," he said.

SILENCE BEHIND BARS: The ten-day programme at central prison in Bengaluru saw voluntary participation of 24 inmates

Using the analogy of a temple and a bull, the guru conducting the sessions explained how the mind needs discipline and control. "Through his teachings, I understood how negative feelings and harmful traits slowly enter us, and how our experiences shape who we become," the prisoner said, adding the meditation sessions helped him understand how to become optimistic.

The programme was conducted with the help of 10 trained police staff members. Prison authorities said the next batch will have 15 participants. While the first two batches are for men, the third batch will be conducted for women. Participation in the programme is voluntary, and prisoners who complete it will receive 15 days of remission.

Alok Kumar, DGP, prisons and correctional services, said: "When convicted prisoners try to transform themselves, it will be good for them, their families and society in the long term. We wanted to provide them with the opportunity to transform themselves with this programme."

According to him, several participants reported gaining a more positive outlook on life and new perspectives on their past experiences.

4.26 Crore Beneficiaries Receive Food Security | The Dream of a 'Hunger-Free Karnataka' Realised

Anna Bhagya -A Modern Form of the Dasoha Tradition

Guarantee Varthe

Bengaluru: "Aashe ichchegenna gaasi maadadirayya, dasohiyaagirpa daasanagirisenna Koodala sangamadeva, dharma" - these immortal lines from Jagajyothi Basavanna's vachana highlight the true essence of compassion and dasoha that every human being must embody. This noble vision of the Sharanas has found expression in the Karnataka Government's Annabhagya scheme. Among the five Guarantee schemes announced by the government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah after assuming office in 2023, Annabhagya has emerged as one of the most significant and successful schemes, reaching the grassroots and benefiting the most vulnerable sections of society.

The scheme was launched with the objective of providing a total of 10 kg of food grains per month to every member of Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya cardholder families in the state. When the Central Government failed to supply the required quantity of rice, the State Government did not remain passive. Instead, in place of the additional 5 kg of rice promised, it directly transferred cash benefits to beneficiaries' bank accounts at the rate of ₹34 per kg through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), amounting to ₹11,821 crore until December 2024, thereby upholding its promise of being a "government that delivers on its word." Over the last three years, Annabhagya has addressed hunger among 4.26 crore families and fulfilled Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's vision of a "Hunger-Free Karnataka."

Daily wage workers, auto drivers, agricultural labourers, and economically weaker families have been saving thousands of rupees every month on food expenses due to the Annabhagya scheme. For nearly a year, poor families used the cash directly credited to their bank accounts to purchase pulses, oil, vegetables, and other nutritious food items, as well as pay school fees for their children. The scheme has brought about a transformative change in reducing malnutrition and strengthening the rural economy.

Crores of Beneficiaries: According to government data, more than 4.26 crore beneficiaries across the state continue to benefit from the Annabhagya scheme. Up to 2023–24, thousands of crores of rupees have been transferred directly into the accounts of poor families through DBT, ensuring transparency. The Public Distribution System (PDS) has been further strengthened, and technology has been successfully leveraged to ensure benefits reach eligible beneficiaries.

A Model for the Nation: No other state in the country has implemented free food grains and direct cash transfer support on such a large scale. Karnataka's model of hunger-free and nutritional security is today being widely appreciated by other states and social experts across the country.

'Indira Kit' to be Implemented Soon

The Cabinet has already approved the distribution of the Indira Food Kit (Integrated Nutrition and Dietary Initiative for Revitalizing Annabhagya Beneficiaries) in place of the additional 5 kg of rice under the Annabhagya scheme. Based on family size, beneficiaries will receive tur dal, sunflower oil, sugar, and salt instead of the additional rice.

The Chief Minister has already instructed that the food kit include a maximum quantity of nutritious turdal. Additionally, software enabling QR code scanning will be installed at every fair price shop, based on which ration card holders will receive the Indira Food Kit.

Siddaramaiah Becomes 'Annaramayya'!

Within hours of taking oath as CM in 2013, Siddaramaiah announced the Annabhagya scheme. Initially offering rice at just ₹1 and later making it completely free, he earned recognition for addressing hunger among the poor. Since then, people of Karnataka affectionately began calling him "Annaramayya." The Annabhagya scheme was reinitiated in a stronger form after 2023 as one of the Five Guarantees. What began as a politically determined welfare initiative has become a source of hope for people in the state.

Statistics

4.26 Crore Total Beneficiaries
More than ₹18,897 Crore utilised so far on Annabhagya

> My son met with an accident and has been bedridden at home. I am the only earning member supporting the family. Earlier, when there was no food, we used to walk barefoot and survive on fruits from the forest. Now, we receive rice through Annabhagya. Thanks to our Siddaramaiah, we are able to live peacefully
>
> **Jademadamma, Chamarajanagar**

> After my husband's death, I struggled to continue our traditional pottery business due to lack of capital. During that difficult time, the Annabhagya scheme became a major support for my family. The free rice and groceries provided by the government completely removed the anxiety of arranging three meals a day for my family.
>
> **Mahadevi, Indi**

> My dream was to live independently without depending on anyone. The Annabhagya scheme gave me strong support. Without worrying about food, and with savings from all the guarantees, I was able to buy a cow and start dairy farming. Today, I live with dignity through the income I earn from selling milk every day.
>
> **Neelamma, Belthangady**

karnataka information

A Fight Against Poverty

I know what hunger caused by poverty feels like. That is why, on my very first day as Chief Minister, I signed the Annabhagya scheme. My aspiration was that no poor person in the state should sleep hungry. That sacred initiative which began then, has today reached crores of homes as a 'Guarantee', and that gives me immense satisfaction.

Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

A Hunger-Free Society is the Foundation of a New Karnataka

Responding to people's hardships is our foremost duty. Building a hunger-free society is the foundation of a New Karnataka. Through Annabhagya and the five Guarantee schemes, our government is committed to making Karnataka the most progressive and welfare-oriented state in the country.

D.K. Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

Food Security Reaches the Last Citizen

Our department has successfully fulfilled the responsibility of transparently delivering the visionary Annabhagya scheme of the Chief Minister to eligible beneficiaries. The Food Department remains committed to ensuring food security reaches even the last poor citizen of the state.

- K.H. Muniyappa, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies

'India's heatwave is a massive historical event — El Nino plus warming can make 2026 hottest year'

Benjamin Zaitchik, Morton K. Blaustein Chair and Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Johns Hopkins University, speaks with Srijana Mitra Das at Times Evoke about India's huge heatwaves:

Can you explain the scale and intensity of the heatwave occurring in India now?

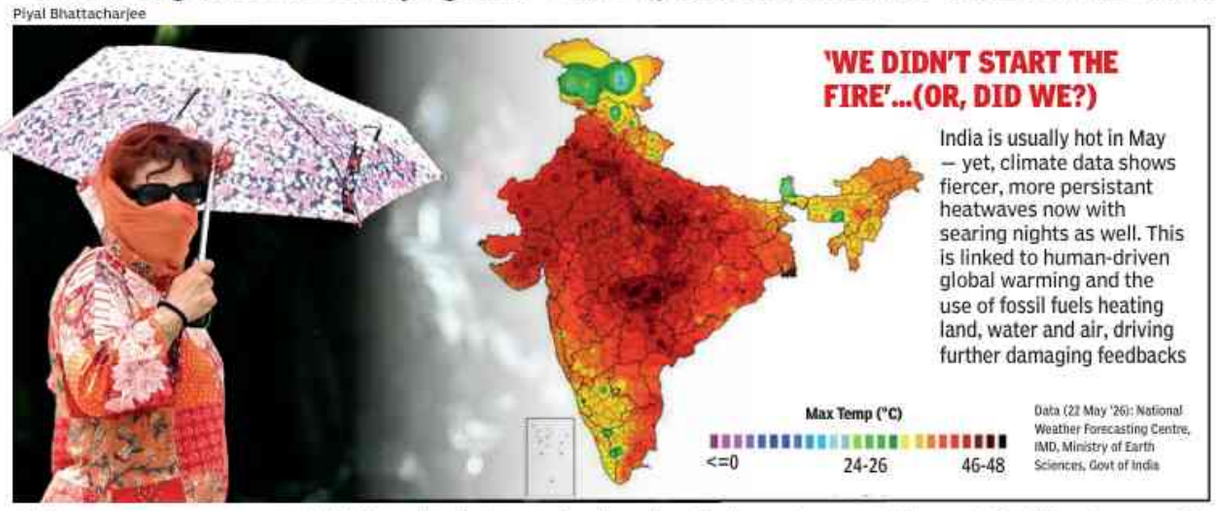
■ In historical terms, this is a massive event. We can't do the statistics yet to see exactly where it ranks — but we do know that India has experienced some of its hottest conditions in recorded history in the last few years. It is becoming more and more common to see these persistent heatwaves. The current event is one of the most intense and prolonged heatwaves in the subcontinent in modern records.

What are the main factors driving as well as deepening this?

■ It's helpful to think about this in terms of both weather and climate. From a weather perspective, usually it does get very hot around now until the monsoon starts. However, this particular weather phenomenon is being amplified via a persistent anticyclone — this is high pressure, keeping hot air in place over the land. When you have air that's stagnant for a long time over land, this heats up the air more than water does — and if the air isn't moving quickly, it really can get baked. So, that circulation pattern has been stuck there for a while. A possible factor is pre-monsoon rains over much of the region have been below average, causing drier conditions that can increase that baking effect.

Alongside, the global climate context is crucial and climate change is inescapable — that's why we are seeing the increasing probability of these very hot events in India and almost everywhere else in the world as well. Another issue in global phenomena is that we are heading into an El Nino event — this hasn't fully developed yet but it can generally reduce rainfall during the monsoon. I know IMD is already looking at this probably being a below-average monsoon year in India. That would mainly be because of El Nino — alongside, there are questions about whether, even as El Nino begins to develop in these precursor stages, that might have something to do with the lower-than-average pre-monsoon rains and therefore, this kind of feedback of dry land heating the air above it. I'd say there's some possibility but the timing isn't quite right to make that El Nino link.

Piyal Bhattacharjee


'WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE'...(OR, DID WE?)
India is usually hot in May — yet, climate data shows fiercer, more persistant heatwaves now with searing nights as well. This is linked to human-driven global warming and the use of fossil fuels heating land, water and air, driving further damaging feedbacks
Max Temp (°C)
<=0
24-26
46-48
Data (22 May '26): National Weather Forecasting Centre, IMD, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt of India

Can you elaborate on feedback effects?

■ When we talk about feedbacks here, the primary issue is that if the ground is damp and vegetation is able to transpire considerable moisture into the air, the energy that hits the land gets converted to what we call latent heat. That creates humidity but, instead of heating up, the land stays cool — therefore, the impact the land has on the atmosphere above it is less severe. It's not heating up the air as quickly. Here, if the land starts to dry out because of, for instance, weak pre-monsoon rains and it starts heating up the air above it, you get hot, dry air — which is thirsty air. That will cause even more evaporation, driving further stress on plants. Almost drought-like conditions can develop, where plants start shutting down and soil moisture dries — that means further drying of the land and therefore, even more of what we call a sensible heat flux. We often see such feedbacks around now in India — however, this year, it's really kicked off strongly.

THE HEAT IS ON

We think of heatwaves as terrestrial events — can you tell us about the ongoing marine heatwave off the US West Coast?

■ This is a heatwave in that it's unusually warm for a persistent duration. With a marine heatwave, we're talking about what's happening in the water. Clearly, the ocean's water has been unusually warm for a long time now — that has all kinds of implications. The most direct impacts are on ocean ecosystems, marine species and, in other locations, coral reefs.

Alongside, when the ocean is warmer than usual, that has impacts on weather that blow onto land as well. We are researching what this will mean for extreme precipitation events now. In a sense, from an extreme weather perspective, it feels almost like the opposite of India's heatwave — there, we say, it's linked to drought because it dries everything out. But if you're over the ocean, there's a vast supply of water that can evaporate. A marine heatwave means more water will get evaporated and carried to land — that can lead to warmer air holding more moisture and the potential for catastrophic flooding induced from such precipitation.

Are there other ongoing global heat events we should look at?

■ I can tell you from my experience how very hot it's been here on the East Coast of the United States — temperature has been breaking records. The winter was devastating — it essentially didn't happen. The mountains of the United States are the nation's water towers and so, there's concern now about our rivers coming out of the Rocky Mountains. The snowpack is at a historic low. All that is related to a persistent high-pressure warm pattern that lasted almost all winter in the western United States.

Certainly, statistically, 2026 is already off to an incredibly warm first several months. We're seeing more extreme heat all across the world and as El Nino comes in later during the year, there's every reason to believe 2026 and 2027 will be some of the hottest years ever seen, with either one probably becoming the hottest year on record. The odds are definitely in that direction now with an El Nino layered onto the global warming phenomenon we are seeing.

What are the physiological impacts of such conditions on human beings?

■ There are direct stress impacts — the body simply can't tolerate that kind of heat. People exposed to this risk heat stress, leading even to heat stroke and dehydration. People with pre-existing conditions, like respiratory or pulmonary issues, could see exacerbations of these. Anybody with circulatory or heart issues needs to be very careful because of this physical stress on the body.

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CATCH-22: Air conditioning is a climate paradox

Worryingly, India also has this combination of poor air quality in combination with such heat. We did a study published recently which showed how in Baltimore in the States, when there's an extreme heat event, particularly nighttime heat, more kids show up in the emergency room with asthma. These findings can reshape our ideas of childhood — around the world, we generally say, 'Go play outside' to kids but now, you want to be careful with that.

In addition, it's also not cooling down at night — and there is a great deal of evidence showing warm nights are particularly physiologically damaging to our bodies which need that time to recover. If you're sweltering for several days, a lot of the most significant health impacts affect people during heatwaves with hot nights, when individuals don't have access to night-time cooling.

When I was a kid in Delhi, a desert cooler was adequate. Now, it's unthinkable to not have air conditioning, which also emits warming greenhouse gases — what do you do in a situation where the solution becomes part of the problem?

■ This is exactly the question we're all asking ourselves. The way we have adapted to extreme heat is positive — here, 'positive' is not in terms of 'good' — reinforcing feedback on climate change. This is a real challenge. As we project forward our carbon emissions associated with energy use, it's obvious those are going to go up as we will all need more cooling. The solution is decarbonising our energy system.

As a climate scientist who works intensively on these issues, do you feel a sense of incredulity when you see the world suffering this fossil fuel-driven climate situation — and a war being fought over fossil fuels?

■ Well, when you look at this as a human being, we can understand how our societies get into these situations. But what's happening now makes you worry on an existential level about what we're capable of as a species. Can we really come together with the foresight and collaboration needed to deal with both politics that lead to conflict as well as our longer-term climate challenge? To my mind, you have to stay optimistic — maybe the current crisis could become enough of a forcing function to help us on both fronts. I wouldn't say the historical record offers particular reasons for optimism at our ability to do this as a species — but we should hope because we have risen to challenges before.

Views expressed are personal

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APOCALYPSE NOW? Charred fish stuck on a Delhi lakebed which dried up in May's heat

Anindya Chattopadhyay

EM-POWER: Decarbonisation and worker safety in India's electricity sector are crucial

TIMES NATION

INDIA DIGEST

Fake Remdesivir drug unit sealed

Dehradun: Uttarakhand STF on Saturday sealed a factory in Kotdwar that was allegedly used to manufacture fake drugs, including Remdesivir injections — an antiviral medication — during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. STF SSP Ajai Singh said the factory, was raided by a joint team of police and other departments based on the interrogation of arrested persons.

Factory blast: Body found after 24 hours

After 24 hours of relentless search, a worker was found dead Saturday in the debris of the factory in Bahadurgarh, Haryana, that was blown to bits in a boiler explosion. Seven persons were injured. The deceased was a native of Bihar.

UP man drives SUV in helmet after fine

An SUV owner in Bareilly was issued an online challan of Rs 1,000 for allegedly driving without a helmet. The incident occurred Thursday, after which Niranjan Kumar has taken to wearing a black helmet while behind the wheel. Kumar said.

Editorial clarification

This refers to the article titled "How vaccine myths are spreading in India" published in the Sunday Times of India on Dec 13, 2020, and also carried on our digital platform. Dr Biswaroop Roy Chowdhary has stated that the report did not accurately or fully reflect his position, including his stated reliance on certain research material and sources. Dr Roy Chowdhary stated that his comments were made in the context of preventive health, nutrition, immunity and lifestyle-based health management, and he disputes the characterization of his statements in the said report. We clarify the above and regret any distress caused to Dr Roy Chowdhary by the publication.

Major Gen, 2 officers survive Leh copter crash

Surendra.Singh
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Three Indian Army officers had a narrow escape after their helicopter crashed in the mountainous Tangste near Leh in Ladakh. A major general, a lieutenant colonel and a major survived the crash but sustained injuries when the Cheetah helicopter went down. "The helicopter crashed on May 20. All three officers are safe. An inquiry has been ordered," officials told **TOI**.

A selfie by one of the officers of the May 20 crash has now gone viral. All three walked out of the wreckage on their own. The single-engine HAL Cheetah helicopter was operated by the lieutenant colonel and the major, while Major General Sachin Mehta, who commands the 3 Infantry Division, was on board as a passenger. The crash took place during a flight over the high-altitude terrain of Ladakh. The specific cause of the incident is currently under investigation.

The single-engine Cheetah was operated by the Lt Col and Major, while Maj Gen Sachin Mehta, who commands 3 Infantry Division, was on board as a passenger

The Cheetah helicopters, inducted into service in 1976, have been a crucial asset for the Indian Army, especially in high-altitude and forward regions like the Siachen Glacier. The Cheetah, which is crucial for high-altitude logistics and reconnaissance missions for the armed forces, has been the subject of ongoing technical scrutiny due to its ageing fleet.

Over the past decade or so, more than 15 Cheetah and Chetak helicopters have been involved in crashes, leading to the loss of life of several pilots. Due to these safety issues, the Army has planned to phase out the ageing Cheetah and Chetak helicopters within the next 1 to 2 years, to be gradually replaced by new-generation Light Utility Helicopters (LUHs) over a span of 8 to 10 years.

It has already placed orders for six limited-series-production LUHs, designed to reach a top speed of 220 kmph, a service ceiling of 6.5 km, and an operational range of 350 km.

BJP govt shortens Bakrid holiday in Bengal

Times News Network

Kolkata: Bengal's new BJP govt has slashed a two-day holiday for Eid-ud-Zoha or Bakrid announced by the previous TMC administration to one day.

In a notification issued Saturday, the Suvendu Adhikari-led BJP govt announced the Bakrid holiday would be observed on May 28. Earlier, the official holiday calendar announced at the beginning of the year by the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC govt, two days — May 26 and 27 — had been earmarked as holidays for Bakrid under Negotiable Instruments (NI) Act.

But with the festival being celebrated on May 28, the BJP govt rescheduled the dates and announced a one-day holiday. All offices will function normally on May 26 and 27, the notification said.

The Mamata-led administration had significantly expanded the state's holiday calendar since it took charge in 2011. These included a two-day holiday for Eid-ul-Fitr as well as Chhath.

TMC councillor found dead in suspected suicide case

Sanjib Chakraborty & Tamaghna Banerjee | TNN

Kolkata: Police Saturday recovered the body of a Trinamool Congress councillor, facing a DA case, from his home in a suspected case of suicide.

The deceased, Sanjay Das, 49, was a councillor in South Dum Dum Municipality. Das's family and neighbours said he was under severe mental stress since a banner came up outside his house a few days ago accusing of grabbing land and extorting money.

Das was found dead in his top-floor flat in a multi-storey building near Nagerbazar where he lived with his wife, teenage son and 6-year-old daughter. The body was first spotted by his son. He was taken by cops to a nearby private hospital at 8.18 am but declared dead on arrival.

He was a close aide of Debraj Chakraborty, husband of former Trinamool Rajarhat-Gopalpur MLA Aditi Munshi. Following the arrest of former fire minister Sujit Bose in the municipal recruitment scam, Chakraborty and his aides have come under the scanner.

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Date for opening of website for Online Registration: 18.05.2026 (from 10.00 a.m. onwards)
Last date for Online Registration: 05.06.2026 (up to 11.59 p.m.) Helpdesk Email ID: **phdcoordinator@dtu.ac.in**

For more information, visit the university website: www.dtu.ac.in regularly for updates and other details about the entire admission process.

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Open E-Tender Notice

The following E-Tenders can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply**. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, **Dy. CMM/P/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340721** or **AMM/P, 9163342746** (For Notice No. A & B) and **Dy. CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711** or **AMM/HQ, 9163340713.** (For Notice No. C). **Office Address:** Office of The PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan.

[A] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 20/05/2026. Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 74263781. Brief Description of Item: Brake Gear arrangement and details without Air Brake Cylinder for WAG-9HC/WAP-7 Locomotives as per Drg. No. 1209-01.116-059, Alt.-5. [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 1071.00 Set. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹ 50,00,000.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 15/06/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

[B] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 21/05/2026. Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 74263780. Brief Description of Item: Air Brake Cylinder as per Drg. No. 01/03/19/56, Alt.-12. [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 8674.00 Nos. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹ 20,00,000.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 17/06/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

[C] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 21/05/2026. Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 73263700. Brief Description of Item: Set of Damper for WAG-9HC Specn.: No. CLW/MS/3/009, Alt.-3 or latest; 1209-01.215 -014 Ref.1 Alt.-2; 1209-01.215-014 Ref.3 Alt.-2; 1209-01.215-014 Ref.2 Alt.-2; 1209-01.215-014 Ref.4 Alt.-2. [**Warranty Period:** 72 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity:779.00 Set. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹ 20,00,000.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST) 15/06/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

[PR4/356] PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan
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Reference is invited to the Employment Notice published on 24.04.2026 for filling up 2 (two) posts of **Marine Superintendent on Deputation basis from Central/State Governments and PSUs,** failing which on **Contract basis,** from eligible candidates with Class I Marine Engineer Officer (MEO) certificate having worked as Chief Engineer in coastal/ foreign going vessels for at least one year.

The last date for receipt of applications has been modified to 02.06.2026. Candidates who have already applied in response to the earlier notification **need not apply again.**

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Getting into DGC was more about whether one fits into Delhi's 'elite class'

▶ Continued from page 1

Central govt had given 27.3 acres of land on perpetual lease to DGC in 1928. The Land and Development Office (L&DO) under housing and urban affairs ministry said it has ordered "re-entry" — which means premature termination of lease and repossession — with "immediate effect" of the property.

It added that upon such "re-entry", the entire plot of land, along with all its buildings, structures, lawns and fittings, "shall vest absolutely" with L&DO. The order directed DGC to "hand over peaceful possession of the premises"; in the event of noncompliance, possession "shall be taken over in accordance with law".

The club has been operated from 2, Safdarjung Road since 1913, when it was called Imperial Delhi Gymkhana Club. After Independence, it was renamed Delhi Gymkhana Club. The present buildings were constructed in 1930s. For over a century, getting into DGC has been less about money and more about whether one fits into Delhi's 'elite class', since it symbolises power and privilege.

The move to take back the land parcel comes at a time when L&DO has issued similar directives to occupants of other govt land along Lok Kalyan Marg.

In a communication to the members, the DGC's general secretary said that the Governing Committee (GC) had an urgent meeting on Saturday and decided to send an "immediate response" to L&DO requesting clarity on issues in the interests of members and employees. He said the committee members will seek an urgent meeting with ministry officials.

Petrol now costs ₹108.05 per litre in Bengaluru, diesel is priced at ₹95.99

▶ Continued from page 1

While petrol now costs Rs 108.05 per litre in Bengaluru, diesel is priced at Rs 95.99.

With global gas prices also on the boil, Delhi's Indraprastha Gas has also announced a fresh Re 1 increase in the price of CNG, taking it to Rs 81.09 per kg in the capital, a second hike in this week. Prices in neighbouring cities of Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurgaon have also gone up. Prices of domestic LPG cylinders and piped cooking gas, however, have remained unchanged.

After the first hike, the govt said the cumulative under-recovery on petrol, diesel and LPG had reduced by 25% from Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 750 crore.

A litre of petrol in Mumbai now costs Rs 108.49, while diesel is priced at Rs 95.02. In Chennai, petrol costs Rs 105.31 per litre and diesel Rs 96.98, while in Kolkata, petrol costs Rs 110.64 per litre and diesel Rs 97.02. Retail petrol and diesel prices are linked to global crude prices, which have risen by over 50% since the war began on Feb 28, disrupting flows through the Strait of Hormuz. The variation in auto fuel prices across states is due to differences in VAT structures.

After keeping petrol and diesel prices unchanged for 75 days despite the rise in crude, oil companies raised prices first on May 15 with a hike of about Rs 3 per litre, followed by another 90 paise increase on May 19. Govt officials said the Centre had initially taken a significant hit on revenues to shield consumers, even as fuel prices across the world rose between 10% and 90%.

An official said most major importing economies had passed the burden on consumers, with pump prices in several countries doubling over the last 48 months.

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Now, the bride pays loan EMIs and MBA fees as dowry takes on a new disguise

The Twisha, Deepika and Pushpendri cases have sparked outrage, but activists say dowry never really went away. It simply took on a more invisible and just as deadly form

Mohua Das & **Himanshi Dhawan** | TNN

A video was circulated widely in 2024 that many shared with a mix of outrage and familiarity. At a wedding somewhere in north India, a man stands at the microphone and reads aloud, with the calm of reciting a grocery list, 'gifts' for the groom at the wedding ceremony: "a Mercedes-Benz E200, a Toyota Fortuner, 1.25 kg of gold, 7 kg of silver, Rs 72 lakh in cash." None of the guests appears shocked. And that is perhaps the clearest indication of how dowry survives in modern India.

Public outrage around dowry has resurfaced in recent weeks after a series of deaths — from Twisha Sharma in Bhopal and Deepika Nagar in Greater Noida to the recent case of Pushpendri Devi in Meerut. But ask anyone who works with survivors of marital violence, from Kolkata to Bengaluru to rural Assam, and they will tell you that while the word 'dowry' is being used less, it hides behind softer, more socially accepted vocabulary of "gifts", "help", "support" and "settling the couple".

Polite Language of Dowry

The pressure is very much there. If older dowry negotiations once revolved around cash, gold or cars and scooters, today's demands are deviously disguised. For instance, a husband telling his wife to ask her parents for money because his printing press is struggling. A mother-in-law who pauses a wedding video and casually states, 'Your family gave a silver bracelet for the aashirvad…could they not afford gold?' In one case from Bengal's South 24 Parganas, a single daughter was allegedly pressured by her husband and in-laws after her father's death to transfer his property in her name so that they could promote and develop it. "The harassment starts escalating to violence," says Sumana Bhattacharya, describing these cases she has worked on as a member of Kolkata-based Swayam that deals with gender-based violence.

> The in-laws expect the woman's family to pay for everything from a honeymoon abroad to their medical expenses. Gone are the days when this was a very public crime, now it is subtle and hidden
>
> **Donna Fernandes,** WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

A counsellor at Mumbai-based NGO Sneha recalls a case where a groom — a doctor — had allegedly demanded that the bride's family build him a hospital. Renu Mishra, a Lucknow-based lawyer and the founder of the Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives Trust (AALI), recalls the case of a railway doctor who was asked to quit her govt job and work in the family clinic run by her husband. "She gave up her job. Then her in-laws suggested that a land worth Rs 1 crore that her parents owned could be sold to pay for her MD degree from a private college. But it was a ruse as they wanted the money for the clinic. There was no physical violence but intense mental, emotional blackmail," she says.

Singer Chinmayi Sripada, who has often spoken publicly about violence and abuse faced by women, had recently posted some "common doctor dowry demands" which included building a hospital for the groom and his family if they were already doctors, extending an existing hospital, or paying for the groom's postgraduate medical seat with land, cash, luxury cars and lavish weddings treated as "extras".

In July 2025, 27-year-old Rithanya from Tiruppur died by suicide barely months after her wedding. Police investigations alleged that despite her family already spending around Rs 2.5 crore on the marriage — including 300 sovereigns of gold and a Volvo SUV — her husband's family continued pressuring her for additional gold, under the pretext of helping him establish his business.

"They ask for money for anything now," says Donna Fernandes, one of the founding members of Bengaluru's feminist collective Vimochana. "The husband will demand money to pursue studies abroad or fund an expensive MBA programme. Or they'll expect the woman's family to pay for a honeymoon abroad. They may ask the wife's family to pay for the medical expenses of the father-in-law if he is in a private hospital," says Fernandes.

Women's rights workers say the Assamese word for dowry is jotuk, though Anurita Pathak Hazarika of Northeast Network, a women's rights organisation in Assam, observes that people today are increasingly careful about openly using such language. "People are quite smart now not to use these terms directly," says Hazarika.

In many north Indian families, especially Rajasthan, dowry from parents is given indirectly as 'bhaat' or 'mayra' by the bride's maternal uncle. "It used to be a few clothes and gifts for the bride and her family placed on a thali, but has now transformed into gifts worth crores," says Pradeep Pundhir, founder of Alwar-based NGO Spectra that works on women empowerment. A 2024 video of a mayra ceremony went viral after men were seen placing wads of cash amounting to Rs 1.11 crore on the thaali for the groom's family, besides offering a tractor and jewellery.

THE MARRIAGE MART

16 women die every day due to dowry violence

Reported cases of **dowry deaths may be coming down**

2023	6,156
2024	5,737

But **suicides** linked to dowry are **up by 6.7%**

2023	1,587
2024	1,693

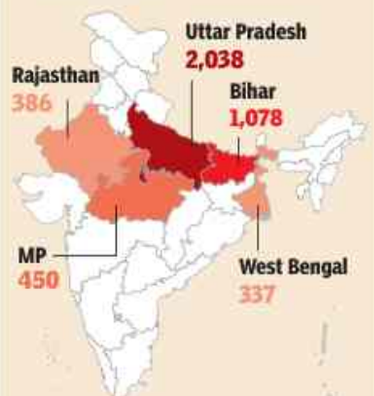
And so are cases of **cruelty by husband or relatives, indicating harassment continues**

2015	1.1 lakh
2024	1.2 lakh

Source: NCRB

75% DOWRY DEATHS IN 5 STATES

UP alone accounted for nearly 35% of all dowry deaths in India in 2024, followed by Bihar



Source: NCRB

Anatomy Of Modern Coercion

Families use many ways to bend the bride's family to their will. When a demand is questioned, it is minimised: "What is the big deal? This is such a small thing." If the transactional nature of the gift is called out, they resort to denial: "We aren't demanding anything; they are giving it out of their own happiness." Finally, if the bride resists, blame is shifted: "You are not doing enough for this family." "If somebody is taunting a woman every day like this, it creates enormous emotional violence," says Hazarika.

Then there are the loans. "In many cases, the husband or in-laws make the woman take the loan and use the money themselves, but the liability remains in the woman's name," Bhattacharya says. "Women come to us saying, 'Didi, there is so much loan debt, what do we do?'"

Even welfare schemes meant specifically for women are not untouched by this, says Nizra Narzary of The Action Northeast Trust. "Most loans and financial schemes are now targeted towards women who are pressured to take these benefits and hand them over to the husband's family," says Narzary.

Activists say many women themselves do not immediately recognise such behaviour as dowry-related abuse in the legal sense. "Women know something is wrong, but they feel trapped in this whirlpool," says Hazarika.

Fernandes believes this invisibility is what has changed most dramatically since the 1980s. "Gone are the days when this was a very public crime," she says. "For the last few years, it has completely gone underground."

When It Was A Burning Issue

For years, the image of dowry violence in India came in the form of 'kitchen accidents'. Young brides with severe burns would be wheeled into hospitals while families insisted the stove had burst or a sari had accidentally caught fire. Women's rights groups in the 1970s and '80s noticed the pattern of victims, almost always women, and newly married.

Fernandes remembers the 1980s, when the burns wards of Bengaluru's Victoria Hospital overflowed month after month. Dowry deaths became one of the biggest rallying points for the women's movement across cities and campuses. "The slogan at that time was 'Brides are not for burning'," she recalls. "These women were being brought in, and all these deaths were being disclosed as accidental deaths — the stove burst, the sari caught fire, all kinds of nonsense."

The agitation that followed — protests, street plays, neighbourhood campaigns, wall graffiti — eventually helped push changes in the law. In 1983, cruelty against a married woman by her husband or in-laws became a criminal offence under Section 498A. The definition of dowry expanded too. The Dowry Prohibition Act, which had existed since 1961, was strengthened to recognise that dowry could be demanded at any point during a marriage, not just at the wedding. But it was only after the Domestic Violence Act was brought in 2005 that there was an acknowledgement of the emotional, mental and psychological harassment that women face in their marital home — abuse often linked to dowry demands but extending beyond them. "We have very strong laws but poor implementation," says AALI's Mishra.

Invisible Crimes

And while the obvious 'stove burst' cases may have reduced, many activists say the deaths themselves have changed into something ambiguous. "Now, many more cases appear as suicides," says Bhattacharya. "Families try to present them that way." This is where modern dowry becomes hardest to see and to prosecute. "The 'stove burst' cases were horrific, but at least they were visible in the burns wards," says Bhattacharya.

Proving that prolonged dowry-linked harassment drove a woman to take her own life requires a painstaking police investigation. "When the question becomes one of abetment to suicide, proving a dowry death becomes difficult," she adds.

INQUIZITIVE

JOY BHATTACHARJYA

1 In 1980, which disease did the World Health Organisation declare officially eradicated, thanks to global cooperation and a new strategy known as ring vaccination?

2 Which six letter word is common to the phrases once used to describe the following rivers — Damodar, Kosi, Mahanadi, Son and Huang He or the Yellow River in China?

3 If the Rani Ki Vav in Gujarat appears on 100 rupee notes, which monument from East India appears on 200 rupee notes?

4 Which Indian city had an IPL franchise for just one year, 2011, represented by stars such as Brendon McCullum, Muthiah Muralidaran, VVS Laxman and Sreesanth?

5 If it is Chuck Norris around the world, and Zlatan Ibrahimovic for all football followers, which performer is the subject of similar hyperbolized memes and jokes in India?

6 Which is the only European country to have hosted the Summer Olympic Games in two different cities?

7 Whose ejection from a first class compartment on June 7th, 1893 in South Africa is believed to have inspired a new form of civil resistance?

8 Which delicious treat, usually available fresh from the end of March to the end of June, is named after the Viceroy of Portuguese India from 1509 to 1515?

9 With costs ranging up to $45 million, which family of musical instruments command the highest prices?

10 In which city do cab drivers, also called hackney-carriage drivers, have to pass a test called 'The Knowledge' to demonstrate that they have an intimate knowledge of the geography of streets and important buildings?

ANSWERS

1 | Smallpox
2 | Sorrow, all these rivers were known for causing floods and damage which is now largely controlled by dams
3 | Sanchi Stupa
4 | Kochi
5 | Rajnikanth
6 | Germany (Berlin and Munich)
7 | Mahatma Gandhi (Satyagraha)
8 | Alphonso mango, named after Afonso De Albuquerque
9 | Violins or Violas (the Macdonald Stradivarius Viola is the highest priced)
10 | London

With gaddas and gajras, mehfils are having a moment

Intimate gatherings around music, conversation and craft are drawing a new generation of audiences to floor seating and slow listening

Mohua.Das@timesofindia.com

INTIMATE EVENING: Mumbai's Mukesh Mills turned into a mehfil venue where Vishal Bhardwaj blended songs, stories and verse for a floor-seated audience

On a recent evening in Mumbai, a roomful of people sat cross-legged on white gaddas in a crumbling cotton mill that once smelled of industrial damp but now had hints of mogra and attar wafting through. Chandelier floor lamps stood where massive iron spindles once did, and carpets hung where powerlooms rattled.

There were no strobes, barricades or crowds craning for a glimpse of someone very small and famous on a very large LED screen. Instead, about 150 people sat close enough to watch director Vishal Bhardwaj drift between cinema, music and verse, pausing in between to tell stories about feeling intimidated during his first recording with Lata Mangeshkar or attempting the jazz number 'An Evening in Paris' on harmonium and tabla.

Across Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Jaipur, Lucknow and Ahmedabad, mehfils and baithaks — those unhurried gatherings where audiences sit close to the artist and listen to music, poetry and storytelling — are making a comeback.

'Mehfils' — historically associated with princely courts and the Nawabi era — have existed for centuries, of course. So has the 'baithak', its smaller domestic cousin, modelled on the household gathering. What feels new is the return of that intimacy in an age of stadium-scale concerts, and the way unusual spaces such as abandoned mills, art studios, private homes, havelis, and even heritage monuments are being repurposed to host these close-knit gatherings.

It's suddenly cool not just for connoisseurs, but also for 20-somethings and curious first-timers, who probably grew up ignoring this music on their parents' playlists, but are now paying to sit on the floor for hours in sari or kurta and a gajra around their wrist and actually listen.

For Tanvi Singh Bhatia, co-founder of Ibtida — Ek Mehfil, one of the early platforms to revive these "immersive, multi-sensory experiences" across cities since 2019, it began as a personal itch. "At the time, there were only large concerts and bigger formats," she says. "Even for the artist sitting there, there was no proximity with the audience." She missed the world she had grown up around — "my nani's home had a lot of baithaks…people sitting over gaddas and singing" — and "that like-mindedness of people coming together for smaller experiences."

Proximity is only part of the appeal. The mehfil is as much about atmosphere. Their evenings might include a kebab vendor from Banaras, a fragrance counter of attars, or textile-based backdrops of colourful Kanjeevarams for a performer like Usha Uthup.

The Room Matters

These gatherings reposition spaces, too. Ibtida has performed in a Banarasi sari store, under a banyan tree, and at the Safdarjung Tomb. Once Upon India, a cultural platform, has hosted themed mehfils and baithaks everywhere from a 19th-century Indo-Saracenic hall in Chennai to a meditative retreat in Chandigarh.

Bombay Baithak founder Sneha Jhaveri hosts evenings in art galleries and private homes. Trained in classical music, she found conventional concerts alienating. "The distance made it feel like we were watching music rather than being inside it," she says.

Her solution was to flatten the room. "Always floor seating or low chairs. No front or back row. Everyone is equally close." She introduces each artiste herself with stories, and looks for spaces that can "hold the music, not just host it…A home has warmth and intimacy, and an art gallery has a certain quietude that no ballroom or concert ground can replicate."

Delhi-based Hindustani vocalist and musicologist Abhinav Arora, who has hosted his 'gharwali' and 'sukoonwali' ghazal and nazm baithaks across cities — from Sarai House in Bengaluru to apartments and libraries in Delhi — is equally particular about the room. He looks for spaces that are "not the conventional auditorium where distance becomes a barrier, and the artist becomes sacrosanct. In a baithak, you cut out the kind of crowd which is there to probably pass time or just be on their phone."

Stories Before Songs

The classical mehfil was never just about performance. It was about hosting, etiquette, conversation, wit, food, and a kind of social theatre. The revival takes this inheritance seriously. Arpita Sharma, one of three co-founders of Once Upon India alongside Malini and Shiva, describes it as a full sensory sequence. "We want people to see, smell, touch, and taste something and, only then listen to something. Our evenings open with a storyteller who takes the room through where they are and what they're about to receive," says Sharma.

At Once Upon India, Indianness is core to the experience. It includes chai, and an invitation to look the part. 'Mehfil hai janab, taiyaar hokar aana, jeans na pehen aana' (it's a mehfil, so don't turn up in jeans!) reads the dress code advisory. When people arrive dressed up, "they're already halfway into the experience," says Sharma. The founders greet regulars by name at the entrance. "It feels like a large joint family getting together."

Regional textile motifs find their way into the backdrops and stage design, the food follows the theme, and the wristbands carry the message 'Aaj se aap humare' (from today, you are one of us).

> Our evenings open with a storyteller. It includes chai, and an invitation to look the part.... When people arrive dressed up, they're already halfway into the experience. It feels like a large joint family getting together
>
> **Arpita Sharma,** CO-FOUNDER, ONCE UPON INDIA

Who The Baithak Brings In

What surprises Arora most is seeing younger people more than older connoisseurs. Some tell him, "My parents used to take us to such gatherings," while others arrive via reels they watched online.

His poetry-meets-music evenings weave in folklore around Meerabai, Amir Khusrau, tawaifs and nawabi culture, but he is careful not to present the baithak as a relic. "It's not like a satsang," he deadpans. "It's talking about modern-day ideology, dating." During one ghazal about letters, he paused to ask the room when anyone had last written a khat.

That growing audience has also widened the kind of artistes entering the mehfil. At one end are stalwarts like Ustad Shujaat Husain Khan and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan with his sons. At the other are evenings with Vishal and Rekha Bhardwaj swapping stories between songs, Usha Uthup electrifying a room with sheer spunk, or the Nizami Bandhu taking the gathering into qawaali trance. Bombay Baithak brings in classical rigour, while Once Upon India brings in folk musicians and regional storytellers, including one gathering that brought together 28 folk artistes from 16 villages across Barmer. And increasingly, the format is spilling beyond folk and classical circles. Electronic duo Tech Panda and Kenzani recently collaborated with Hindustani classical musicians and Kathak dancers for an 'electronic baithak'.

These exclusive ticketed gatherings may be niche, but Sharma argues that the niche has little to do with class. "Yes, there is a particular kind of person this is for. Someone who values calm, is curious about culture and stories, and finds meaning in slowing down."

Crafting An Experience

What these evenings are also making visible are the quieter worlds around the performance itself. Ibtida has featured a calligrapher who is the last in his family to practise the form, alongside attar-makers, old carpet weavers and regional food traditions. Bhatia is now planning a larger format with weavers and artisans, bringing crafts into a mehfil rather than a gallery.

Once Upon India's gatherings similarly spill beyond music into vintage toys and artefacts, folk tales, textiles and older culinary traditions. During a Punjabi baithak, the team discovered that phulkari literally means flower work, with motifs inspired by the flowers women saw around them. "That one detail opened up a whole world of stories," says Sharma. "That's what happens when you go deeper than the performance. Culture reveals itself in the most unexpected ways."

Sharma imagines the format becoming even smaller and more specific. "We envision a world of about 30 people in small rooms celebrating poetry, music, handiwork, and regional traditions. Home chefs doing tasting evenings, artisans sharing their craft around a table."

Working-age popn rising despite dip in fertility rate

▶Continued from page 1

India's working age population (15-59 years) is still growing even in states with very low fertility indicating that the demographic window for India has still not closed. The 15-60 age group constitutes 66.4% of India's population (up from 64% in 2014) compared to the dependent population of 0-14 years (24%) and those above 60 years, less than 10%.

However, the window is expected to close soon with the working-age population peaking as can be seen in states like Tamil Nadu where the proportion of working age population has increased by barely 0.6 percentage points in the decade before this report, from 67.2% to 67.8%.

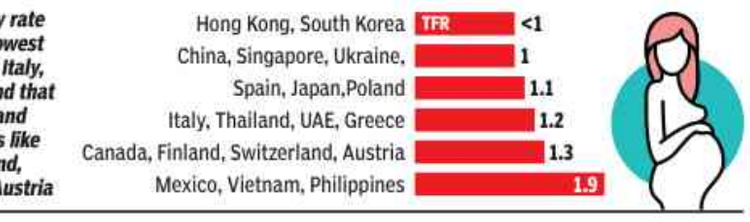
The proportion of those over 60 has gone up from 8.6% to 9.7% in India and it has increased in all states. The state with the highest proportion is Kerala (15%) and the state that has seen the highest jump in the proportion of 60+ population between 2014 and 2024 is Tamil Nadu—from 10.6% to 14.2%. Assam has the lowest proportion, 7.6%.

"We can expect an acceleration in the decline in fertility and we still have high mortality, especially infant mortality, and our overall mortality is comparatively high too. But we are far from reaching zero population growth or stabilising of population because of a very large population of young people still in the reproductive age group. Hence despite falling fertility rates we will continue to see considerable growth due to this momentum," said Prof Arokiasamy Perianayagam, a fertility and population expert.

STATE OF THE STATES

TFR-2024			
States	Total	Rural	Urban
Bihar	2.9	3	2.3
Uttar Pradesh	2.6	2.7	2.1
Madhya Pradesh	2.4	2.6	1.8
Rajasthan	2.3	2.4	2.1
Chhattisgarh	2.2	2.4	1.6
Jharkhand	2.2	2.3	1.7
Assam	1.9	2.1	1.3
Haryana	1.9	2	1.6
Gujarat	1.7	1.9	1.5
Uttarakhand	1.7	1.8	1.5
Odisha	1.6	1.7	1.2
Himachal Pradesh	1.5	1.5	1
Karnataka	1.5	1.6	1.3
Telangana	1.5	1.6	1.4
Andhra Pradesh	1.4	1.5	1.3
Jammu	1.4	1.5	1.2
Maharashtra	1.4	1.5	1.3
Punjab	1.4	1.5	1.4
Kerala	1.3	1.3	1.4
Tamil Nadu	1.3	1.3	1.3
West Bengal	1.3	1.4	1.1
Delhi	**1.2**	**1.3**	**1.2**
India	**1.9**	**2.1**	**1.5**

Delhi's fertility rate which is the lowest in India is like Italy, Greece etc. And that of Kerala, TN and West Bengal is like Canada, Finland, Switzerland, Austria



Russia lured foreigners into its army with fat perks, says govt

▶Continued from page 1

So far, 48 air tickets have been provided under Indian Community Welfare Fund," Bhati said.

Explaining why large number of Indians are joining Russian army despite the ongoing war with Ukraine, the Centre told SC that Russia lured foreigners into its army with lucrative packages, social security, compensation, citizenship offers and remission of prison sentences.

"It appears that certain Indian nationals voluntarily signed contracts to join Russian army, lured by the attractive salary package that amounts to an upfront signing bonus of around $5,000 USD and a monthly salary of $2,500 USD, in addition to promise of Russian citizenship, social benefits and compensation of $1,68,000 in case of death," Bhati said. She said two Indian students, Kishore Saravanan and Sahil Mahamadhusen Majothi, had signed the military contracts to avail of amnesty while serving prison sentences in narcotics cases. While Saravanan was released from armed forces on Indian govt's intervention, he stayed in Russia and took its citizenship.

The salary package has an upfront signing bonus of $5,000 USD and a monthly salary of $2,500 USD, a promise of Russian citizenship, and $1,68,000 to be paid in case of death

Majothi had reportedly surrendered to Ukrainian forces, and the govt is taking up his case with that country, she said, adding that Russian authorities had refused to recruit Ashim Kumar Chatterjee from Kolkata on Indian govt's intervention.

Though the petitioner's counsel had been given the status report more than a week back, the lawyer told the bench that the report was given to him on Thursday, a day prior to the hearing in court. Bhati deprecated the lawyer's attempt to sensationalise the somber issue and said the required assistance is being provided to families of the deceased for claiming compensation from Russian authorities.

Out of four compensation claims submitted through Indian embassy to Russian authorities, one family has received compensation. She said three other claims, submitted independently, had also been cleared and compensation has been paid by Russian govt to the families.

"To facilitate the tracing of missing individuals and identification of mortal remains, DNA reports of immediate family members of 21 individuals have been collected and transmitted to Russian authorities with active facilitation by Indian govt," she said.

Govt informed SC that of the 26 individuals referred to in petition, 14 have died, 11 are reported by Russian authorities as missing in action and one has been imprisoned for eight years after being convicted of molestation charges – the person was arrested in Apr last year and sentenced in Feb this year. It said Russian authorities have informed Indian govt that recovery/extrication of mortal remains of Indians from conflict zone is not possible at present.

A near-identical cycle during 2015-16

▶Continued from page 1

Pacific warming gathers force through latter half of one year, reaches fever pitch around year-end, then fades before India's June-Sept monsoon sets in.

During record 1997-98 episode, sea-surface temperature anomalies climbed from 1.6 degrees Celsius in June-July-Aug to 1.9 degrees in July-Aug-Sept. Heat surged further to 2.3 degrees in Sept-Oct-Nov and peaked near 2.4 degrees in Oct-Nov-Dec. By middle of 1998, system had sharply weakened and slipped into La Niña territory.

A near-identical cycle unfolded during 2015-16. Ocean temperatures rose from 1.6 degrees in June-July-Aug to 1.9 degrees in July-Aug-Sept before vaulting past 2 degrees later in year and cresting during winter. By arrival of 2016 monsoon, Pacific furnace had already cooled.

"Strong El Niño reaches peak strength towards end of year or early next year and then weakens. Before following monsoon, it often becomes neutral or shifts towards La Niña, which is what we expect in 2027," an IMD official said.

Forecasters said subsurface cooling signals are already flickering across western Pacific, hinting at a possible transition next year. Still, scientists cautioned against reading too much into projections stretched far into future, warning forecast skill weakens at longer range.

GP Sharma, president of meteorology and climate change at Skymet Weather Services, said intensity alone does not decide fate of India's monsoon. "Degree of El Niño does not matter much. Weaker El Niño events have coincided with drought years, while stronger ones have not always produced severe impacts," Sharma said.

According to Sharma, six strong El Niño events since 1950 delivered sharply different outcomes over India — one severe drought, two moderate droughts, two normal monsoon seasons and one below-normal year. That split verdict underlines role of other climate drivers steering monsoon currents.

Court increases jail terms of Azam Khan, son to 10 years

Sandeep.Rai@timesofindia.com

Meerut: In a setback to Samajwadi Party neta Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam Khan, a Rampur MP/MLA court on Saturday enhanced their prison sentences from seven years to 10 years each in the fake PAN card case in which they are involved.

The order came after the court heard an appeal filed by state govt seeking stricter punishment. On Nov 17, 2025, a lower court had sentenced the father-son duo to seven years' imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 50,000 each. The court has now increased the fine to Rs 5 lakh each.

In its appeal, the prosecution argued that the matter was not a clerical error but a criminal offence involving deliberate forgery and misuse of govt identification documents. The state sought exemplary punishment to deter "such fraudulent activities".

The case originated from a complaint filed by BJP MLA Akash Saxena in Rampur on July 30, 2019.

(With inputs from Asif Ansari)

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WANTED BRIDES

MATRIMONIALS
WANTED BRIDES
BY CASTE
AGARWAL-BISA

29/5'10 B.Tech-IIT MS wkg with google 1Cr +well establd B'ness Fmly. Caste No Bar .No dowry Rich Fmly #9826502693 Email: bdmatj@gmail.com

BRAHMIN

SM 30/6'3" Law graduate, Jabalpur M.P, High Profile , Hotelier, Real Estate Business, Contact only vegetarian Hindi Speaking family. # 7999907232.

WANTED BRIDE
For Fair, Handsome Brahmin Boy, Born 1991, 5'8". MBA from prestigious Stanford University (USA), BTech (CSE) from NIT (Double Gold Medalist). Rich Affluent Nuclear Business Family of IITians and IIMians from Bhopal, MP.
Mob.: 9399820743
sssk36014@gmail.com

JAIN

FAIR H'some B.Tech MBA Own Business Dubai/Jpr based 87,5'7", Income 1 Cr, Elite Jaipur Jain Family. 9784696982

JATAV

H'SOME Dubai-based MS USA Jatav boy 1991/5'7"/$150K Delhi NCR family seeks beautiful well-educated girl. Cast no bar#9650408495

KAYASTHA

37YRS Bhatnagar Manglik MBA boy 5'11" noida based 15 LPA. Consultant in MNC. 9412084272 , mrraj4@gmail.com .

SAXENA 5'7" , 1992 Born, B. Tech 45 LPA MNC Banglore needs Prof. Qlfd Working Girl Contact 9415520099, 7355509293

KHATRI

49/5.9 TALL divorcee belongs to high status family prefer middle and upper cast and beautiful very fair bride contact 9554222279

VAISH

GUPTA Boy 29/5'9" IITB BTech Germany masters wkg in Delhi, parents govt doctors Indore, seeks working veg girl below 28 year. 9425087718

BY COMMUNITY
AGRAWAL

SM4 NM Garg Boy, Never Married, Nov.'84, 5'-7", BE, MBA (USA), Software IT Prof. , CA-USA, H1B. Seeks US based working Girl- 9099978143

BY RELIGION
CHRISTIAN

SYRIAN Catholic bridegroom, 1986, 174 cm fair, B.Tech MBA, MNC Bangalore, A fair good-looking qualified bride needed. 99720 05190.

HINDU

HINDU Besta, Kannada, June'84/Pune Born/5'8",Graduate, Never Married, good-looking, Job in RBI Press, Mysore, 20LPA seeks Hindu, Never Married, good-looking bride(34-41), 5'-5'8", Educated, Working, mother tongue Kannada/Marathi/ Tulu/ Konkani/ others preferred. Caste no bar. Call/WA 7899402978

ADVICE
Readers are advised to make appropriate / thorough enquiries before acting upon any advertisement. This newspaper does not vouch or subscribe to claims and representations made by advertisers regarding particulars of status, age income of bride/groom.

WANTED Beautiful fair colour Bride, general caste, Graduate Age about 30+ Ready to fly UK/India for handsome 46/5'8" Vaishya Gupta Super Surgeon works UK & Planning Clinic at Pune 7974602176

CASTE No Bar HYD B.Tech boy in MNC, OCT1995 5'8" seeks beautiful educated HYD based alliance whatsapp 9000031115 /9949521299

MUSLIM

WANTED beautiful tall, religious girl for H'some 27 yrs, 6'ft Sunni Businessman, office in Mumbai & Dubai from reputed family. Ph: 9867503350

H'SOME boy 32/5'11' PG from UK, of elite Hyd family - seeks prof qual Sunni muslim girl. Call or W/A 9679999635

SIKH

MBA (ISB,Hyd)+BE cln shaven, nvr mrd, handsome 38/6'4", 70 LPA Bangalore based. Seek Sikh/Pb girl, caste no bar Ph 9035408600

GURSIKH Arora h'some boy Feb '95/5'11" veg teeto, Adocate at Delhi.Comfortable life.Joint family concept.Befitting match may contact/whap : 9837200022

GENERAL
CASTE NO BAR

HINDU, never married. Age 45, 5'7". IIT, Ph.D. Professor in US, Green Card. Non-smoker, Non-drinker, vegetarian. Seeking Never Married, Veg bride below 37 yrs. No caste bar. Contact: 8600315420

1976 Handsome Telugu AUSTRALIAN Citizen M.TECH (RMIT MELBOURNE) Divorcee with no issues, seeks a Smart, Slim, well-educated girl from a cultured family. Send BPH to WA No. 9900194241.

REPUTED Hindu business family from Hyd Alliance for son 40 looking for homely girl from Hindu business family&HNI family only 9885008270

BANGALORE settled hindu kerala pillai boy 48/5.6", legally divorced, self employed caste no bar. 9900595898, 8073594062.

QUALIFIED no dowry match for 5-8 slim punjabi hindu khatri 1988 nonsmoker boy of status family in permanent central government Group B service at Delhi 9417131101

✔ **29** Yrs 5'8" BTech MSc boy Working in MNC in UK Seeks prof. qualified bride Willing to settle in UK Contact honeypi@yandex.com , WhatsApp 9451446465

35/5'7 H'sm smart own business very decent income BBA from Symbi hails from Pune basd reputed fmly seeks B'ful slim fmly girl from upper middle class 9681734049

SOUTH Delhi Kayastha boy, LLM (Ivy League), Lawyer working in Delhi. Nov 91 born (6'2.5") seeking a well Qualified girl. Caste no bar. 9811996787

B.TECH IIT + ISB (MBA) '84|171 cm Tech Founder/CEO Dubai. Income 10 Crore. Elite Jaipur Jain Family 9829294900

PATEL boy, 33yr/5'7" MS (Electronics), Software Engineer Germany, PR Status, Caste No Bar, Call 919993013290

Seeking professionally qualified tall girl from cultured family for 36/6'3", Baniya boy, M.Tech (USA), working in Top MNC in Bangalore. Both Parents doctors in Lucknow.
Please call/whatsapp
9415026358
9415518399

SECOND MARRIAGE

SM4 MBA, 46/6' US Ctzn, wrkg in USA MNC Hdu Pnjbi H'some, phyly fit D'vce, 1 daughter w/ex wife. Seeks Girl below 37 yrs. Simple Marriage. E: lotuslily45@gmail.com

SUCCESSFUL 43, humble, open-minded, intelligent (PhD), responsible AI scientist. Seeks progressive, compatible, well-read bride. Call/WA 93456 34365

RELIGION NO BAR

38/5'10" Unmarried Boy Cast No Bar Btech-MBA IIM, Working MNC 60 LPA Bn'ess Family Accpt Div & Widow Cont: 9009486689, 7587736854

BY LANGUAGE
BENGALI

QM4I Brhmn, 29+/5'11", B.Tech, Mgr Intl MNC. Fair, handsome, affluent family. Parents: Engr & Cent.Govt Mgr. Seek highly-edu, wrkg bride from family outside WB #8826680512

PUNJABI

DELHI Based H'some, Fair PB boy, 1995/5'10", MBA, divorced short 2 months marriage. Educationist running reptd Sr. Sec. Schools. Seeks B'ful, Edu. girl from resp. fmly. 9999185900

BY NATIONALITY
NRI/GREEN CARD

BALIJA Naidu 32, 6'1" MS, MBA on H1B in US seeks alliances from tall, fair, beautiful well educated girls in US from respectable south indian families. WA 9309744976 / email vwnaidu@gmail.com

Seeking alliance for an internationally acclaimed Doctor-Entrepreneur (38, 5'5") based in Singapore, founder of an innovative medical start-up dedicated to transformative healthcare solutions. Double major from Ivy League University USA. Amiable, well-read, tech savvy, from a distinguished Kayastha family in South Delhi. Seeking an enterprising professional with global exposure ready to embrace new horizons in Singapore. Caste no bar.
Call: 9811023140, Email: zen41320@gmail.com

WANTED GROOMS

WANTED GROOMS
BY CASTE
BRAHMIN

SM4 Gaur Brhmn girl, B.Des., 29Yr/5'5",Wrkg in BLR,earning H'some sal.pkg. Seeks PQ Veg North Indian Brhmn T'totaler Boy wrkg in Metro City (pref. BLR), Whtsp: 9718957776 8 , 9703830947,9886607922 email: aksharmagzb2022@gmail.com

PQM 4 BR. DAUGHTER BE IT NOV - 83 / SENIOR SOLUTION ARCHITECT-BANGALORE USA MNC 60 LPA / PH:+91-9327325444 / MAIL : tkn1944@gmail.com

ALLIANCES invited for 1993 born, IT professional, 5'8", Kannada Speaking, Bangalore based, Vegetarian, Elite family. Horoscope Matching must. Interested parties can send details to vissan@zohomail.in

WEL Stld in Blr USBSMS done Seeks an edud Man upto 52yrs for 46+Vg Iyer USC,Caracdnt NJ2005 Wdw, Slw wlktlk use wlkr,DV 2018 Not wrkg C: 9945505879/7349264137

SPB Bhrdj gtr 29/5'4" wheatish Hmly B'ful grl Mtech Wkg MNC 20 LPA Frm Lko prnts Govt Drs seek 5'8"+ PQM MNC/Govt Ofc. All Brh acptd BP: 9415250223

SM4 42/5'4" Never Married Brahmin girl M.Tech CS MNC Gurgaon, All Upper Caste invited 9211823839

KAYASTHA

ARCHITECT Mathur girl, Jan'95/5'6, wkg Gurgaon, Delhi family sttld GGN, seeks smart prof qlfd match preferably from GGN/ Delhi. Call 8178979923.

KHATRI

SEEKING a well-settled, smart, tall boy for a 5'.5", Dec 94 born, punjabi girl, working in BLR, but ready to relocate. call/ whatsApp 9849640921

H/STATUS Sikh buss. fmly seeks PQM for convent edu b'ful girl nov 93/5'5½"MBA/ s-emplyd/high income / Canadian PR. 9876001157

KURMI

KURMI Kshatriya Girl 28/5'4" Wheatish Bhopal M.P. Based Working in Dubai (80Lpa+) Engr. (Gold) MBA IIM Ahmedabad # 7415139337

BY COMMUNITY
AGARWAL

PQM for Goyal girl 5 ft / born April 1987/51 kgs MBA, MS working in USA. I-140 approved. Open to relocation in USA /India. Mobile 9823345267

28 , Agarwal, 5'1" M.Sc. in clinical psychology Whatsapp only with full detail - 7764838207

KERALITE

PHD, SCIENCE Research Girl Jul'94 5'4 working UK.Seek Qual boy,Parents working Singapore #+6596660955. vsheba.oes@ gmail.com

RAJPUT

WELL settled groom from elite business/affluent family from Rajput/ upper-caste for 31/5'8", good looking, corporate professional belongs to reputed business family. Cont : 6268474143, 8770148091

BY PROFESSION
DOCTORS

MATCH for Garhwali Rajput Doctor pursuing MD (Derma), 27 years, height 5'2" from educated, cultured family. Seeking doctor (MD/MS/DNB) from well-educated family. WhatsApp: 9820749630

LOOKING for groom MEDICO Bangalore based Agarwal girl,Jan'97,5'4", Fair, MBBS, MS General Surgery, working in private sector. WA: 9927392058, 9036034670

MD 31y6m Affluent Smart Good-Looking Working in Corporate Hospital Vanniar seeks Well to do Groom MD/MS 9840471097

Medico Alliance invited for smart good looking Rajput Girl 31/ 5'02" MS ophthalmology, working for a leading Hospital in Delhi belongs to a reputed status family. We are looking for Post graduate medico Rajput boy only.
7838387034
or whatsapp latest bio data with pictures.

Bride Groom Wanted for DOCTOR
Hindu Nadar MBBS Doctor pursuing MS (OG) – Final Year 25 Years height 5'5", fair and Good Looking Native Thoothukudi District and settled in T. Nagar, Chennai, VIP Family and Rich background Looking for MBBS, MD, MS qualified Groom
rjrhouse201@gmail.com
9487657423 / 9514777115

BY RELIGION
HINDU

SM4 Brahmin Girl b'ful 32/5'4, Gazetted Officer Vadodara, Managing mild Parkinsons, leads an active life, Upper Caste no bar, send BHP on Whatsapp 9314014461.

DOCTOR, MS (O&G), DNB, MRCOG (London), FNB Bangalore. DOB 05.11.1990, Rohini star, Rishabh Rashi. No Dosham, Tamil Kshatriya girl. Both parents Doctor in Bhilai. Seeking PG Doctor Mob: 8103350889

HINDU Girl, 05-1997/5'2" B.Tech, Software Engr., MNC, Hyderabad, Punjab origin. Seeks well-settled, prof.qual Boy mat246k@gmail.com

SM4 28Y 5'4" Fair Punjabi Girl MBA MNC Gurgaon Seek PQ boy 29 to 31Y in Corporate or Com. Pilot from Defence Offrs Family WA 7838706856

MUSLIM

SUNNI Muslim Reputed fmly of Patna seeks edu. family oriented groom (Syed, sheikh, Pathan)for good looking , tall girl 25, MBA (United Kingdom) M- 8294358123

SIKH

South Delhi based reputed Gursikh business family seeks alliance for their daughter, 27/5'2", US Graduate and MBA from a premier Indian institute. Looking for a Gursikh (Non-Trimmer), well educated professional/ businessman from a cultured family in India or abroad.
Contact
9953659473
Vakr3422@gmail.com

GENERAL
CASTE NO BAR

REPUTED Punjabi family, Patna, seeks upper-caste (Hindu) match for daughter, 39, 5'4", LLM (top institute), lawyer, graceful & accomplished, Educated, progressive, well-settled, financially stable groom preferred. No dowry. Contact: 9934423838.

SEEKING alliance from upper caste for Bangalore based,MArch,beautiful,1995 /5'6", daughter of Army officer.Mother, sister Doctors.Contact 9885186147

BEAUTIFUL doctor girl 96/5'2 final yr Pediatrics. Father Retd defence officer seeks suitable Medico/Defence/Services/Professional. WhatsApp 8275224791. e mail 101996pp@gmail.com

LUCKNOW based Girl 5.2"/1996 working as a Research Scientist U.C.L.A (USA). Call : 9319500861, 9650312918

KAYSTHA June 95 born 5'4" MBA work in MNC Bengaluru Parents Retd. officers LKO Seek Qualified upper-caste boy based in BLR/HYD/PNQ/BOM WhatsApp: 9369499615 / 9415070723

MBA, 35/5'6" Kysth very fair bful daughter of Army officer.good singer,emplyd as govt officer seek alliance from Defence/A grded govt officer or equivalent 9874271649.

MS in Elec Engr from Houston Univ USA, Jatav B'ful 29/5' wkg girl in Pennsylvania USA, Seeks well stld prof qlfd match, prfd from USA # 9958993849

MATCH for Brahmin, March 86/5'1'', BE, Divorced, Beautiful, 70 LPA Bangalore (Jaipur Family). Upper Caste No Bar Send BHP 8949222130

1997/5'2"/ Upper Middle Class Family From Delhi NCR Seeks Match From UK/Europe/ India Based Boys. Contact: 9717415333

BA LL.B (Law) B'ful Bengali Girl 34/5'2"/ Own Business, Affluent Family. Seeks Prof. Qualified. Well Settled Boy. Contact: 6294241602

COSMOPOLITAN

LONDON based Fair Smart Conv Edu girl 39/5'3" BE,MBA. Sr.Consultant Top MNC. Highly edu fmly Bihar/UP. Email: spriyadarshee@gmail.com WApp/Call:+91 9445021180.

FIN Well Stld PQM for Slim B'ful 1984/5'6" Pbi girl BTech & PG Wkg as Mgr MNC Dubai Shrt Mrg Dvrc I'Less Pune: 7717639665

SC/ST

SUITABLE Match for JAISWAR (SC) Beautiful Smart Girl 30/5'9" BBA LLB, Wkg MNC Hyderabad, 35 LPA caste no bar. Mb- 9936899315

SECOND MARRIAGE

ATTRACTIVE architect 39, 164cm, loyal, well-spoken, open-minded. Cultured family. Seeks smart, compatible groom. Caste no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365.

BY LANGUAGE
BENGALI

BENGALI b'ful girl 94 born/5'-4", Chandigarh based Pastry Chef Bengali/Non-Bengali upper caste families only. Contact : 8284854506.

MBBS, MD Ansth Tata Kay. Bride 22.7.87/ 5'2" Mum, D. dib fel' Cardio & C care MRCP P-1 & II prf MD Dr. IT 9821212409, sinhaassociates27@gmail.com

PUNJABI

AFFLUENT family looking for well settled, professionally qualified match for their 38 year 5 feet 3" pretty Punjabi Khatri daughter foreign educated and well employed with MNC in Delhi. Non manglik. Caste no bar. W'app/Call 99990-10178, 2ajgrover@gmail.com

A prominent and respected Punjabi family of high repute into multifaceted business, seeking alliance for their very smart and beautiful Daughter, 28 year 5',5" height. She is educated in the US and runs her own successful venture . We are looking for an educated , intelligent boy with a pleasing personality from an industrial house or business. Family has to be cultured and affulent. Metro cities preferred.
8879773272
Or Mail Us At
inpurplebasket@gmail.com

" Seeking a suitable match for a C.A., cultured and family oriented girl"
36yrs, 155cm, Punjabi Arora/Khatri, C.A. currently working at senior position in a leading bank in Chandigarh. She is smart, caring, and values both modern outlook and traditional family values.
We are a respectable and well-settled family based in Ludhiana.
"Looking for professionally qualified, well settled, non-divorcee, born after 1985 and caring groom from a reputed family
Caste no bar. Horoscope matching can be considered. Please respond with full details at: Email : skg.businessmail@gmail.com
WA Profile +91 9814138500

TELUGU

TELUGU, YADAV Bride, 28 Y, 5.4 ft, B.Tech. Seeking Well educated Suitable Groom. Contact:8919377540

BY NATIONALITY
NRI/GREEN CARD

MENG, lovely Hindu Bengali (British Indian) (non-veg) girl, seeking a well educated, professionally established, genuine and caring groom (27-32 years) with liberal family values and compatible cultural / religious background. Groom should be a British citizen/UK permanent residency and residing in UK. Contact email: gd_7735 4@yahoo.com

USA parents North Indian origin, seek match for daughter, 32 yrs / 5'2", MBA, California resident. Qualified US resident only. E: garibneuron@gmail.com

MASTERS n Qualified Teacher Status Shia Syed B'ful girl 28yrs 168cms from UK. Teaching in London having Skilled Visa Bought up in India 9839413369, +447440774954

B.TECH Tamil Mudaliar Girl DOB Dec 94 NRI Wkg MNC UAE, 42LPA,Seeks boy Wkg Abroad, CasteNoBar CT8667248379,

SEATTLE /metro area based boy for Microsoft s/w Engr girl Dec91 / 5'5" nonveg, Caste/lower age no bar WA 9845624616

PQM4 Sindhi Girl 49/5'4" Never Married B.E. MBA Sr Director USA M:9820303313, E: Vivah77@gmail.com

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'Food delivery apps reflect changing lifestyles, but kids should know value of a home-cooked meal'

*Every television viewer from the '90s remembers watching the show 'Khana Khazana' with the mustachioed chef who effortlessly cooked mouth-watering dishes with a warm smile, and signed off every recipe with his signature phrase "namak swaad anusaar". **Chef Sanjeev Kapoor** is often dubbed the face of Indian cuisine. In 2017, he received the Padma Shri in his chef's whites, becoming the first person to break the traditional dress code. The Ambala-born chef spoke to **Neha Bhayana** about his parenting journey, modern culinary habits and the value of traditional cooking*

Chef, entrepreneur, husband, dad — which is the toughest role?
I think every role comes with its own responsibilities and learning curves. The truth is that nobody has all the answers. You learn on the job and grow through every phase of life. Nothing feels tough when you genuinely enjoy the journey. I believe a lot depends on your outlook towards life and how you embrace both the challenges and the beautiful moments that come along with every role.

Your daughters are all grown up now. What are they pursuing?
Rachita (28) is a lawyer by profession, but over the years, she has also become deeply involved in our media and digital business. She brings a very sharp strategic perspective to everything we do. Kriti (31) is based in London and is pursuing a career in sports marketing and analytics. She has always been passionate about sports, so it's wonderful to see her build a career in a field she genuinely loves.

> I don't think parenting can be defined as a single, definitive approach. Every generation's parenting style is different based on the times they live in. What's important is finding the right balance and understanding what your child needs at different stages of life

Your elder one is married now. From father to father-in-law, how has the journey been?
It has been a beautiful journey. As a parent, you always want your children to be happy and feel supported. Seeing them build a life of their own is very fulfilling. At the same time, the family grows, relationships evolve, and that is something very special to experience.

Most kids miss mummy ke haath ka khana when they grow up and move away. Do your kids miss papa ke haath ka khana? Do you cook at home too, or only at work?
Haha! Our daughters love good food, so there are always special requests when we are together. Since Kriti lives away now, her cravings for ghar ka khana are more, be it papa ke haath ka ya mummy ke haath ka. Some of their favourites that I cook when we are together are laksa and palak khichdi, which we make in a mitti ki handi, though honestly, sometimes it's simply whatever they feel like eating at that moment. Alyona (his wife) is a wonderful cook too. In fact, she makes the best dosas in our house, and all of us love them.

Were you a present papa or a weekend dad when your daughters were growing up?
Family has always been my priority. I strived to be there for them whenever they needed me. Whether it was helping them study before exams, attending school events, or cheering Kriti on during her sports competitions, I made sure to be there. I would block important dates in my calendar in advance so that I didn't take up work commitments on those dates.

What, according to you, is the most challenging part of being a parent?
I think the most challenging part is finding the right balance between giving your children guidance and values, while also allowing them the freedom to become their own individuals. As parents, you want to protect them, but you also have to learn when to step back and trust them.

Were you a strict dad or a soft one?
Woh toh aapko meri betiyon se poochna padega! Main toh soft hi kahunga! (You will have to ask my daughters that. I would say soft). Alyona always says that when the daughters want something, they go to papa!

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timesparenting@timesofindia.com

Is the old school 'hands-off' parenting better than today's 'hands-on', super-involved parenting or vice versa?
I don't think parenting can be defined as a single, definitive approach. Every generation parents differently based on the times they live in. What's important is finding the right balance and understanding what your child needs at different stages of life. It's important to communicate.

Who's harder to feed — a fussy child or a fussy customer at a restaurant?
A fussy eater is a fussy eater, whether it's a child or an adult! In fact, sometimes adults can be even more fixed in their preferences and less willing to experiment. At least with children, tastes evolve with time. But honestly, understanding people's food likes and dislikes is all part of the fun and challenge of being a chef.

Cooking is a survival skill, but these days, few parents bother to teach their kids to cook. Today's generation relies more on Zomato and Swiggy than on their own kitchen. Your thoughts?
Cooking is a life skill, and everyone should know at least the basics to be able to take care of themselves. Food delivery platforms like Zomato and Swiggy are a reflection of changing lifestyles and convenience-driven living, which is natural with every generation. At the same time, it's important to understand the value of a home-cooked meal. *Yaad rakhe, ghar ke khane mein pyar hota hai aur bahar ke khane mein vyapar* (Remember, home-cooked food is full of love and take-away meals are a business). As parents and as an industry, we should strive to make home cooking easy, approachable, and interesting for children, so they learn it while enjoying the process.

Aloo paratha and khichdi used to be staple meals for kids. But these days, parents worry that their child may not be getting enough protein or fibre if they eat these. They also try to eliminate sugary foods. Is it important to watch what kids eat so closely?
There's a lot of value in traditional foods, and they are meant to be had as part of a balanced meal. Balance is always the key. We shouldn't look at eliminating foods. The focus, however, should be on moderation and balance. Parents should also eat well-balanced meals for children to emulate them.

Feeding kids is one of the biggest parenting stressors. You often see moms chasing their kids with bites or handing the iPad at mealtime. How can parents help their kids develop a good relationship with food?

> Mealtimes should feel relaxed, not stressful or forced. The more pressure we attach to food, the more difficult it is to build a relationship with it. Involve children in menu planning, shopping, and meal prep. They'll become more curious and connected with food an early age

Mealtimes should feel relaxed and enjoyable, not stressful or forced. The more pressure we attach to food, the more difficult it can become for children to build a healthy relationship with it. Children learn a lot by observing, so when families eat together and parents themselves enjoy balanced meals, children naturally pick up those habits. It also helps to involve children in menu planning, grocery shopping, and meal prep wherever possible. When kids participate in the process, they naturally become more curious, comfortable, and connected with food from an early age.

CHEF'S SUMMER VACAY RECIPES

Mango Chocolate Marble Cake

- Preheat the oven at 180°C.
- Sift 2 cups refined flour, 1tsp baking powder and ½ tsp baking soda in a bowl. Add a pinch of salt, 1 cup yogurt, 1 cup sugar, 3/4th cup oil, and whisk well. Add 1 ½ cup milk and mix till a smooth batter is formed.
- Divide the batter into 2 equal portions. Add 2-3 tbsps cocoa powder and ½ tsp vanilla essence to 1 portion and 2-3 tbsps mango pulp to the other portion.
- Take a silicon loaf mould and pour the mango batter at the base. Pour the chocolate batter on Top and swirl with a toothpick to give marbled effect.
- Bake in preheated oven for 25-30 minutes.
- Allow to cool and de-mould. Cut into slices and serve.

Cucumber Tahini Sandwiches

- Take 1/4th cup of tahini in a bowl. Add 1/4th cup hung yogurt, 1 tsp garlic paste, salt and crushed black peppercorns to taste
- Add 1tbsp chopped dill leaves
- Thinly slice two medium English cucumbers into roundels. Transfer into another bowl. Add salt, pepper, 1 tsp olive oil, ½ tsp lemon juice and mix well
- Place four bread slices on the worktop, and apply the tahini mixture on both sides. Arrange the cucumber slices on one side and cover with four more bread slices

A ban can backfire. Experts suggest having open conversations to raise teens who don't feel the need to hide

What the Finsta! How to deal with your teen's secret social media life

Sidhi Kapoor

When 15-year-old Myra (name changed) is using her smartphone, her parents think she is researching for school projects. That's the impression she has given them. But the reality is that she is often scrolling her 'finsta' or secret Instagram account, sharing selfies or reels with her close circle of friends. Myra's mother follows her main account, but has no clue about this other account.

Finsta accounts are fake or hidden Instagram accounts that users create to share candid, unfiltered content with a select group. While celebrities, influencers and socialites use finsta to avoid public scrutiny of every post, teens are now using these profiles to escape the watchful eyes of parents as well as nosy uncles and aunties. "We (teens) like to vent with our friends without judgment and comments from families," says Myra. "I have just 15-20 close friends on my finsta. To be honest, I mostly post 'rate me' picture polls."

Delhi mom Anushree Jani (name changed) recently stumbled upon her daughter Riya's finsta and is still wondering what she should do to stop her from using it. "We were on a trip when she got obsessed with clicking selfies. She kept asking for the spare phone. I felt there's something fishy, so I checked her phone later and realised she had created accounts on Instagram and Snapchat without our knowledge," she says.

Jani admits she was taken aback as she wondered why her daughter was being so stealthy. "When we confronted her she was in denial. We ended up having an argument. After that, I tried to locate her Instagram accounts again, but they seemed to have vanished," she says. Jani knows that her daughter doesn't want her to follow her on her social media account because peers roast and tease each other, but she feels uncomfortable about this secrecy. She is still struggling to figure how she should deal with this matter without losing my daughter's trust and spoiling their relationship.

Experts say parents are unable to prevent their kids from leading 'double lives' because they are not as tech-aware as their kids. Teens know how to create multiple accounts, use VPNs (data logging), and 'hide apps' that makes traditional parental controls less effective. Ashutosh Bhatia, AI expert and founder of AleaIT Solutions says, "AI-driven tools and easily available information are making it simpler for users to learn how to bypass restrictions. The core issue is the technology gap between parents and children. Teenagers are digital natives, while many parents are still adapting to these tools."

So, what should parents do? Ban social media? Experts feel this can backfire. Psychologist Ruby Ahuja suggests having open conversations with one's teen. "Ask your child why they feel the need for a finsta," she says. "Often, it's to avoid the gaze of uncles and aunts following their main account. Suggest a 'Close Friends' list on their main account as a compromise."

With tools like Turbo VPN and Dual Space that hide activity from parental controls, many parents are locked out.

> You can say something like this to your teen: 'I get that having family follow your main account feels like having us in your bedroom while you're hanging out with friends. I don't want to hover. If you need a space for just friends, let's talk about how to keep that without hiding'
>
> **Ashutosh Bhatia**
> TECH EXPERT

Experts advise that it's crucial to educate teenagers about the risks of VPNs and the permanence of fake accounts. Cyber security expert Shubham Singh says a finsta is still a digital footprint that can be screenshotted or misused. "The real protection comes from active parenting, setting clear rules for one's children," he adds.

Experts say the idea should be to not be a helicopter parent, but at the same time to keep one's child safe in the online world. Bhatia feels it is important to understand that no system can completely stop a determined user from evading controls. Today's teens know how to bypass monitoring apps and privacy settings to hide their profiles. "Some teenagers use app hiders or vault apps to ensure they are not caught. These look like normal apps (like a calculator), but actually hide other apps or photos. Then there are dual/clone apps that let them run two Instagram accounts on the same phone. Parents should look out for them," shares Singh.

Even the most diligent parents using Meta's tools are still only seeing half the picture, experts say. Meta's Teen Accounts have been available in India since February 2025. Under-16 accounts are private by default. Kids can't be messaged by strangers. Parents can see who they engage with and set time limits. It's important for parents to "turn on" these features. A Meta spokesperson told us that parents can link or monitor multiple accounts by one teen. "Teens aged 13-15 need to request parent or guardian approval to change their Teen Account settings to be less protective, unless their parent or guardian permits their teen to change these settings without them. Parents will be notified in their activity feed and, if enabled, via push notification, if their teen requests to make changes to any of these settings," he says. However, Meta can only provide security within its own platforms, the spokesperson adds, and it cannot help if teens use VPNs or external apps to bypass parental controls and monitoring.

The problem persists. Either parents are not aware about their child's alternate accounts or are unable to trace them. "Many phones already have a hidden or secure folder where apps can be kept out of sight. Check if there are apps you don't recognise, especially ones that look like calculators or vaults. If you notice too much secrecy and if your child suddenly hides their screen or gets uncomfortable when you ask, that's a sign," says Singh.

Most parents struggle to approach this subject with their teen. Bhatia says parents should focus on device-level controls, watch for usage patterns, and encourage open conversations rather than relying only on restrictions. Ahuja agrees, "Try talking to your teen in a calm moment after dinner or a walk. You can say something like this to them: 'I get that having family follow your main account feels like having us in your bedroom while you're hanging out with friends. I don't want to hover. If you need a space for just friends, let's talk about how to keep that space safe without you having to hide it from me'."

Cyber experts say a parent's goal should not be to catch a finsta, but rather to raise a teen who chooses to show you their real feed. That starts when parents stop stalking and start asking: "How was your day — online and off?"

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Dos

- Talk openly. When your child is comfortable and in a chatty mood, ask them directly if they have more than one social media account. If children feel safe, they are less likely to hide things
- Sit with your teen and set up teen account supervision together. They should know it's for their security, not spying
- Suggest safer privacy tools like Instagram's 'Close Friends' list
- Use parental controls. Tools from Google or Apple can help you. See installed apps / Limit downloads / Track screen time
- Do regular phone checks, but do it openly, not secretly
- Look at the app list and storage. See which apps are using the internet or battery
- Teach online safety. Strangers, fake profiles, and scams are the real risks of hidden accounts

Don'ts

- Don't demand passwords. Experts warn sustained surveillance undermines privacy and teaches kids to hide better
- Don't freak out at slang/ cryptic posts
- Don't use monitoring apps secretly. If you are discovered, your child will not trust you again

JAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Indira Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur-302004

No.: JDA/EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-I/2026-27/D- Date : 22.05.2026

NOTICE INVITING BID

NIB No. : EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-I/08/2026-27

Bids are invited from interested bidders for following works: -

S. No.	UBN No.	Cost of Work (Lacs)	Nature of Work	Last Date
1.	JDA2627WLOB00088	881.44	Traffic Improvement	08.06.2026
2.	JDA2627WLOB00092	1406.32	RUB Work	08.06.2026
3.	JDA2627WSRC00101	477.74	Civil Work	10.06.2026
4.	JDA2627WLOB00102	2428.40	Traffic Improvement	11.06.2026
5.	JDA2627WLOB00104	653.02	Renewal of Main Roads and Construction of Drain	11.06.2026
6.	JDA2627WLOB00105	1302.52	Construction of Drainage Pipes	11.06.2026
7.	JDA2627WLOB00106	4003.78	Providing, Laying & Jointing of Lateral Sewer Lines with Construction of Manholes	25.06.2026

Other particulars of the respective bid may be visited on Procurement Portal website www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.jda.rajasthan.gov.in.

Executive Engineer & TA to Dir. Engg-I

Raj.Samwad/C/26/3387

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.W.D., CIRCLE-JHALAWAR

Room No. -158, Ground Floor (Public Works Department), Mini Secretariat, Jhalawar
E-mail :-piu_jhalawar@rediffmail.com/sejwar.pwd@rajasthan.gov.in Phone No.:- 07432-33336

S. No. :-170 Date-18-05-2026

NIT No. 06/2026-27
Notice Inviting Bid
NIB No. PWD2627A0595

Bids for **12 Nos CD Works in Jhalrapatan Constituency in Distt. Jhalawar** are invited from interested bidders **upto 6.00 PM, Dated 14.06.2026** Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal **(http://erpoc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in)** of the Rajasthan and **http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in website.** The approximate value of the procurement is **Rs. 2084.52 Lacs.**

S.No.	UBN No.	S.No.	UBN No.	S.No.	UBN No.
1	PWD2627WSOB02700	2	PWD2627WSOB02701	3	PWD2627WSOB02702
4	PWD2627WSOB02703	5	PWD2627WSOB02704	6	PWD2627WSOB02705
7	PWD2627WSOB02706	8	PWD2627WSOB02707	9	PWD2627WSOB02708
10	PWD2627WSOB02709	11	PWD2627WSOB02710	12	PWD2627WSOB02711

Sd/-
(Mukesh Chand Meena)
Superintending Engineer
Public Works Department , Circle-Jhalawar

DIPR/C/8903/2026

राजस्थान सरकार
कार्यालय नगर विकास न्यास, चितौड़गढ़ (राज.)

E-mail :- uitchittorgarh@gmail.com Phone 01472-251055

क्रमांक/ न.वि.न्या./लेखा / 2026-27/1148 दिनांक :- 22/5/2026

ऑन लाईन निविदा सूचना संख्या 06/2026-2027

नगर विकास न्यास चित्तौड़गढ़ में उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीबद्ध एवं विभिन्न विभागों में ''ए'' एवं ''एए'' श्रेणी में पंजीबद्ध संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में वेब साईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। कुल कार्यों की संख्या 31 जिसके U.B.N.No.

UTC2627WSOB00012	TO	UTC2627WSOB00042

(1) कार्य संख्या 01 से 26 व 29 से 31 तक

ऑन लाईन निविदा डाउनलोड/ अपलोड करने की तिथि	25/05/2026 से 31/08/2026
ऑन लाइन रसीद जमा करने की तिथि	31/05/2026 अपरान्ह 06:00 PM बजे तक
ऑन लाईन निविदा खोलने की तिथि	01/06/2026 11:00 AM
(2) कार्य संख्या 27 के लिए	
ऑन लाईन निविदा डाउनलोड /अपलोड करने की तिथि	25/05/2026 से 03/06/2026
ऑन लाईन रसीद जमा करने की तिथि	03/06/2026 अपरान्ह 06:00 PM बजे तक
ऑन लाइन निविदा खोलने की तिथि	04/0/2026 11:00 AM
(3) कार्य संख्या 28 के लिए	
ऑन लाईन निविदा डाउनलोड /अपलोड करने की तिथि	25/05 /2026 से 13/06/2026
ऑन लाईन रसीद जमा करने की तिथि	03/06/2026 अपरान्ह 06:00 PM बजे तक
ऑन लाईन निविदा खोलने की तिथि	15/06/2026 11:00 AM

Sd/-
अधिशासी अभियन्ता
नगर विकास न्यास, चित्तौड़गढ़

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. H-GS-UBL-02-2026-27
Dated : 19.05.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Provision of Two additional looplines with R&D facilities and associated works at Vijayanagar Railway station along with associated Electrical General, Electrical Traction and Signal & Telecommunication works (Composite work).	Rs. 11,54,88,289/-

Last date for submission of bids:
Upto 11:00 Hrs on 22-06-2026

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Chief Project Manager
Gati Shakti / Hubballi

PUB/154/AAS/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No: PCMM/ CLW/ HWH/E-Procurement/ 26/17, Dated: 20/05/2026. PCMM/CLW/HWH on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/ likely suppliers are requested to look up the website **www.ireps.gov.in**. for detailed instructions. These are E-Tenders only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. **Sl. No.; Tender No.; Description of Stores; Quantity; Due On; Tender Cost are as follows: [040]; 4263008;** Foot Step Light As Per (i) SPEC. NO. RDSO/PE/SPEC/TL/0091-2016 (REV.1) & (ii) BLW DRG. NO. ELSK-252 ALT. a [Warranty Period: 72 Months after the date of delivery]; As Per Tender/ Document; 05/06/2026; ₹ 0.00. **[041]; 31262706A;** Set Of Metallic Hose For WAG-9 As per CLW specn: CLW/ES/ 3/0309/E; As Per Tender/ Document; 27/07/2026; ₹ 0.00.

PRS/357 PCMM/CLW/Howrah

visit us on:www.facebook.com/clwrailways

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED

e-Procurement Tender Notice (Paper Notification)

TGSPDCL intends to float tender for procurement of (a) LT TVR 200/5A 0.5S Cat-C DLMS & IRDA with Box Meters (b) 3Ph 10-40A IRDA 1.0C Net Meter with and without PP Box (c) 11 KV 400A Conv. Double Break AB Switches with insulators (d) GI Stay wire 7 /2.5 mm (e) GI wire 4 mm

For further details of each item above, please visit **www.tgsouthernpower.org, www.tender.telangana.gov.in, www.auction.telangana.gov.in**.

Phone:040-23431360, 1033, 1035, 1026

Sd/-CHIEF ENGINEER (P&MM)
TGSPDCL, Hyderabad.

DIPR R.O.No.162-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27 Dt: 23-05-2026

29001/9/2627

Government of Odisha
Sports & Youth Services Department
Kalinga Stadium, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012
e-mail: deptsportsodisha@gmail.com

Corrigendum

With reference to RFP No: PT2-SYS-YS-YS-0017-2026-16012/SYS dated 11.05.2026, modifications to the RFP have been issued vide Corrigendum No. No. PT2- SYS-YS-YS-0017-2026-**17608**/SYS dated 22.05.2026 and No. PT2-SYS-YS-YS-0017- 2026/**17609**/SYS dated 22.05.2026. These amendments shall be deemed an integral part of the original RFP.

All other terms and conditions stated in the original RFP remain unchanged. All applicants are requested to comply with the revised provisions.

For further details, please refer to the official notifications available on the websites: **https://sports.odisha.gov.in** and **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**.

Sd/-
Additional Secretary

OIPR-29001/29001/1/26-27/0007

25001/222/2627

eMail: se_nerwkjr@rediffmail.com

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: KEONJHAR

eProcurement Notice for Road Works under MMSY (Mission PoWaR) & MMSY-TRIP
Bid Identification No. NCB-05/RWCKJR/2026-27
No. 2628 / Date : 14.05.2026

1. Name of the work : **Construction and Improvement of Road Works under MMSY (Mission PaWaR) & MMSY-TRIP in the District of Keonjhar.**
2. No. of work : **49** (Fourtynine) Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure in NIT.
4. Class of Contractor (Eligible) : As per Annexure in NIT.
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure in NIT.
6. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E.R.W. Circle, Keonjhar	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar	NCB-05 / RWCKJR / 2026-27	Dt.28.05.26 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.11.06.26 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.10.06.26 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.12.06.26 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

- **Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
R.W. Circle, Keonjhar.

OIPR-25001/25177/1/26-27/0006

25001/223/2627

E.Mail - serwcirclesbp@yahoo.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ROAD TENDER ONLINE RWCSBP-07 / 2026-27

1. Name of the Work : Road Works
2. Total No. of works : 54 nos Road work
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 100.58 lakhs to Rs. 492.90 lakhs
4. Class of contractor : 'B', 'A' & 'Spl.' Class
5. Other details : As mentioned in DTCN

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender on-line for bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur	ROAD TENDER ONLINE RWCSBP-07/2026-27	28.05.2026 11.00 A.M	16.06.2026 05.00 P.M

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur

OIPR - 25001/25091/1/26-27/0007

32001/273/2627

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
POTTERU IRRIGATION PROJECT, BALIMELA
e-mail Id : ccepotteru123@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice No.- CCE-PIP-BML-02/2026-27

1. Type of Works : System Improvement works.
2. Total No. of Works : Three (3) Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs. 223.53 Lakh to Rs. 250.42 Lakh
4. Period of Completion : Eight (8) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. In Lakhs)	Availability & Submission of Bids-on line.
Chief Construction Engineer, Potteru Irrigation Project, Balimela, Malkangiri	CCE-PIP-BML-02(1)/2026-27 to CCE-PIP-BML-02(3)/2026-27	Varies from Rs. 223.53 Lakh to Rs. 250.42 Lakh	From 29.05.2026 10.00 A.M. to 08.06.2026 5.00 P.M.

Date of opening of the Tender / Bid : 09.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Potteru Irrigation Project, Balimela

OIPR-32001/32052/1/26-27/0004

25001/221/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: SUNDARGARH
AT/PO-SANKARA, SUNDARGARH-770020, E-mail address-serw_sundargarh@yahoo.com
No. Tender Online - RWCCESNG - 06 of 2026-27, Letter No 2852 /Dtd. 15.05.2026

e-Procurement NOTICE

1. Type of the Work : Road Work
2. Class of Contractor : As specified in the column-6 of the Annexure
3. Time of Completion : As specified in the column-5 of the Annexure
4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached
5. Estimated Cost : As specified in the column-4 of the Annexure
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time for Seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh	RWCCESNG-06 of 2026-27	28.05.2026 11:00 AM	18.06.2026 5:00 PM	17.06.2026 5:00 PM	19.06.2026 11:00 AM	Will be intimated separately

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh

OIPR-25001/25133/1/26-27/0008

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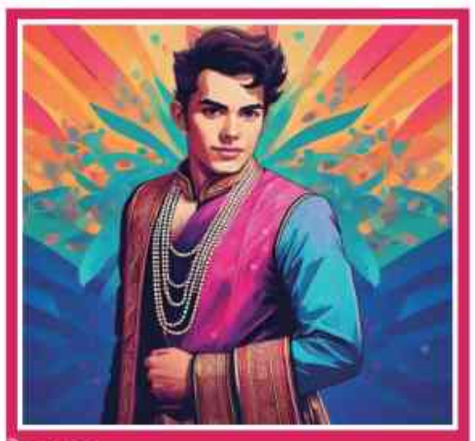

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WANTED GROOMS

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KSHATRIYA Raju, 23yrs, 165 cms, Completed(M.S.) - Software professional at US. Looking for groom from India. Call: 6366448338

"THESE PROFILES ARE FROM ELITE MATRIMONY"

Stock market strength is now rupee's curse

SWAMINOMICS

SWAMINATHAN S ANKLESARIA AIYAR

Why is the rupee falling like a stone? The exchange rate was Rs 85.8 to the dollar at the start of 2025, fell to Rs 90 by the start of 2026, and then touched a record low of nearly Rs 97 last week.

The rupee is sinking mainly because Indian stock markets are overvalued compared with their peers. So, global money is leaving India for other emerging markets and the safe havens of the West. An astonishing $53 billion has exited Indian stock markets in the last 18 months. What looks like a success—strong markets—has enabled foreign portfolio investors (FPI) to exit at a high price.

Earlier, such a massive FPI exit would have smashed markets. But today, India's middle class is in love with stock markets and is pouring money into Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs), entailing fixed monthly investments by investors regardless of the state of the market. Fund managers have convinced investors that they should not try to time their entry into markets and invest a regular sum every month. This has induced a rising SIP inflow, up from Rs 20,000 crore/month at the start of 2025 to Rs 32,087 crore in March 2026. This massive inflow has propped up the market despite the FPI exit. The Sensex is down from 85,444 at the start of the year to 75,415, but that is nothing compared with the fall in other emerging markets.

India's price-earnings ratio—the ratio of share price to net profit per share—is 22.5 on a trailing basis and 18.8 projected for the coming year. The emerging market average is just 15-16, China is just 12-14, Korea is 10-12, and Brazil is 8-10. So, India trades at a premium of 40-60% compared with the emerging market average, 70-90% compared with China, over 100% compared with Korea, and close to 150% compared with Brazil. No doubt India has stronger growth prospects than the others. Even so, its markets look overpriced. No wonder global money is leaving.

The exodus has extended into Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The RBI's Annual Report 2024–25 shows gross FDI at $81 billion, but net FDI was lower than $1 billion. The May bulletin of the RBI shows a recovery in FY26, with gross FDI inflow rising to $95 billion but a net inflow of just $7.7 billion.

We have two kinds of FDI outflows. Outward FDI — Indian companies investing abroad —is a good sign that Indian companies are becoming multinationals, and so its rise from $11 billion in 2020-21 to $33 billion in 2026 is welcome. More disturbing is the repatriation and disinvestment by foreign investors, which shot up from $27 billion to an all-time high of $53 billion. This is over and above the repatriation of profits and royalties. What's up?

FDI QUANDARY: The exuberance of Indian investors has pushed valuations so high that MNCs as well as PE/VC funds are seizing the opportunity to exit

Since stock market valuations in India are so much higher than in Korea, Hyundai India launched a public issue at a high price and took the proceeds home. Other multinationals in India are also going for public issues or private equity sales, repatriating the proceeds.

Besides, private equity and venture capital funds have been supporting the growth of Indian start-ups, a very positive trend. The buoyant stock market has enabled start-ups to make public issues at a decent price. Such public issues give the PE/VC funds, which invested in the early stages of each start-up, a chance to exit at a huge profit. This is, overall, a good thing — the ability to exit at a profit will induce more foreign investment into Indian start-ups. But it does mean that, for now, rising capital repatriation has become the main reason for net FDI falling to virtually zero.

You can blame the exuberance of Indian investors. They have pushed valuations in the stock market so high that old MNCs as well as recent PE/VC funds are seizing the opportunity to exit India at prices higher than available elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the Iran war has raised the price of oil and other commodities. India's current account deficit is bound to widen, but not to crisis levels. Even if the war continues for six months, the current account deficit may go from 0.9% of GDP to no more than 2.5% of GDP, which is bearable. However, this adds pressure on the rupee.

In the short run, the RBI is using its reserves or swap facilities to shore up the rupee. But unless the Iran war ends, the pressure will continue.

What India really needs to do is attract more FDI. The gross inflow has not risen at all for five years. India remains a difficult place to do business. Alas, we see little sign of serious action here. ■

No place for genital mutilation in modern society and it's not just a Bohra issue

*More than a decade ago, when **Masooma Ranalvi** first spoke publicly about being subjected to khatna (the local term for female genital mutilation or FGM) at age seven, she helped push the practice within the Dawoodi Bohra community in India into the national spotlight. As the SC resumes hearings in the long-pending case in which she is a petitioner, fresh evidence from Kerala is widening the debate beyond the Bohra community. Ranalvi, founder of WeSpeakOut, spoke to **Mohua Das** about why she believes the fight in India may be entering a new phase*

Has there been a shift in the way the court views FGM?

It felt different. Earlier too, the three-judge bench — Justices Dipak Misra, Chandrachud and Khanwilkar — had made very positive observations. They questioned bodily integrity and spoke about child rights before the matter shifted into the religious space. This time, the core issue before the nine-judge bench is the conflict between Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution — the individual's freedom of religion versus a denomination's right to manage its religious practices. We submitted that when a child is subjected to bodily alteration and mental suffering in the name of religious observance, it enters constitutional and criminal scrutiny. To this, Justice Bagchi remarked as far as FGM is concerned, the expressions 'health' and 'public health' themselves may be sufficient. What we are hoping for is recognition from the court that this is a child rights violation, a criminal act, and something that affects bodily integrity. If that happens, it will create pressure within the community and on the govt to make policy changes, run awareness campaigns, educate doctors, support survivors, and spread awareness about the harms of FGM. It also gives courage to people within the community who are still on the fence.

FOR THE RECORD

The FGM petition has now spent years moving between the Constitution benches and questions around religious practices. What has this long legal limbo meant on the ground for survivors and activists?

That's an excellent question because nobody really cared what happened in the interim seven years. We were really dejected. More importantly, the practice continued, and many girls went through something that perhaps could have been avoided had the matter been heard earlier. Nobody really sees the urgency of the issue. This is irreversible damage being done to a child's body. There should be no space for something like this in a modern society that claims to care about women's and children's rights. At the same time, the delay forced us to regroup and rethink our strategies. We realised this is an uphill battle because we are up against a very powerful religious hierarchy, politically and economically. They have done everything possible to stall progress on this issue. So, we began looking outward, learning from global movements and forming alliances. FGM exists in 94 countries, and there are struggles everywhere. In Africa, 29 countries have laws against FGM. Last year, the WHO released updated guidelines for health workers after nearly a decade. Type III infibulation (the most severe kind of FGM) gets the most attention, but there are other forms too, including nicking and pricking.

For years, FGM was seen only as a Dawoodi Bohra issue. What prompted WeSpeakOut to look at reports of FGM emerging from Sunni communities in Kerala?

There had been whispers about the practice in Kerala and parts of Tamil Nadu, but there was no direct evidence or survivor testimony. Then, around 2017, there was a story about a Kozhikode clinic and one survivor who spoke about it. There was a huge backlash against her. After that, the issue again went cold. But we decided to explore it further. Getting evidence is next to impossible. In the Bohra community, some of us stepped forward and gave interviews, so conversations opened up. However, our yet-to-be-released exploratory study gives enough evidence to show this needs more research, data collection, and intervention strategies.

What differences did you notice in Kerala compared to the Bohra context?

The biggest difference is age. In the Bohra community, there is a stipulated age of around seven. In Kerala, FGM is done around the 40th day after birth. At that age, the part involved is so tiny that even skilled surgeons would struggle. The chances of damaging the clitoris are extremely high. Another difference is who performs it. In Kerala, it is the 'Ossathi' community, women from the barber community who traditionally perform the practice. In some places, there are also clinics that point to growing medicalisation. The women survivors spoke about difficult sexual experiences, but they had not necessarily connected them to the FGM they underwent. That understanding comes much later when you begin understanding the function of the clitoris.

After more than a decade of working on this issue, do you see more Bohra parents choosing not to subject their daughters to khatna even if they may not say so publicly?

Absolutely. Wherever we've been able to reach women through conversations, literature, campaigns, or media coverage, it has had a positive impact. But there are still many women who haven't heard or engaged with these debates, especially in smaller towns and rural areas in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh where many Bohras live. There is also another section that openly says this is their belief and their right, and they want the practice to continue. That's why outreach matters. The more conversations happen, the more likely it is that the practice will reduce over time.

NSO's health survey shows real gains but also a crisis hiding in plain sight

BY INVITATION

URVASHI PRASAD

Every few years, the National Statistical Office (NSO) holds up a mirror to the nation's health. The 80th round of the Household Social Consumption Survey, released recently, is that mirror. What it reflects is not a simple story of progress or failure, but both at once, demanding to be read together.

The gains are genuine. Institutional deliveries have risen to 95.6% in rural areas. Govt health insurance coverage has expanded more than threefold in rural India since 2017-18, from 12.9% to 45.5% of the rural population. The use of public health facilities for outpatient care has grown. These are real improvements in real people's lives, and they deserve acknowledgement.

But the same survey also tells us this: one in eight Indians is currently sick. The disease rate has more than doubled since 1995-96. Cardiovascular diseases have nearly tripled in seven years — from 1,333 cases per 100,000 population in 2017-18 to 3,891 in 2025. The average out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) on hospitalisation stands at Rs 34,064 — while the median is Rs 11,285, meaning costs are heavily skewed toward the most serious cases. And in India's poorest states — Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh —patients at govt hospitals are paying more than the national average, not less.

NCD TSUNAMI

The cardiovascular finding deserves to be read slowly. A near-tripling of heart disease burden in seven years is not a statistical fluctuation. It is an epidemiological signal that tells us India's disease profile has fundamentally shifted, faster than its health system has adapted.

What makes it more urgent is who is being affected. The survey shows cardiovascular disease hospitalisation rising sharply in the 30-44 age group, with young adults between 15 and 29 also showing increasing vulnerability. This is the working-age population — economically active, disproportionately uninsured in the private sector, and almost entirely absent from India's non-communicable disease (NCD) policy frameworks, which are calibrated around the elderly. I know something of what it means to be ill in this age bracket. Diagnosed with cancer in my mid-thirties, I navigated a system that had not been designed with someone like me in mind — not in its protocols, not in its research, not in its financial protection mechanisms. The NSO data tells me that this experience is no exception.

WHAT THE AVERAGES CONCEAL

The survey's most striking finding on equity is one that has received the least attention: in India's poorest states, the public hospital is the most expensive hospital. Bihar's average OOPE per hospitalisation at a govt facility is Rs 10,553. In Uttar Pradesh, it is Rs 12,878. In Jharkhand, Rs 12,364. The national average is Rs 6,631. The households least able to absorb health costs are paying the most — at the facilities that exist precisely to protect them.

Cancer is identified as the costliest hospitalisation condition — at Rs 1,04,424 per case, it is nearly 50% more expensive than heart disease treatment. For a family in Bihar or Jharkhand, that can be a financial sentence. Insurance coverage expansion, however welcome, does not automatically reach those who need it most: in states where implementation is weakest, among populations with the least capacity to navigate enrolment processes.

DATA GAP MIRRORS POLICY GAP

Yet the survey itself embodies the very problem it documents. It measures hospitalisation costs in granular detail but does not report total OOPE on outpatient care — even though that data was collected. Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, which reviewed the report, called this a major analytical shortcoming. It is also a political one. A health data framework that centres hospitals is the mirror image of a health system that centres cure over prevention.

India's NCD burden — tripling cardiovascular disease, skyrocketing cancer costs, rising diabetes — is not primarily a hospitalisation failure. It is a primary care failure, a public health failure, a failure to invest upstream before patients arrive at a ward. The survey tells us what the system spent on treating disease. It has almost nothing to say about what was spent — or not spent — preventing it.

A health system that has expanded insurance coverage while watching cardiovascular disease nearly triple has not solved the problem; it has insured people against a crisis it has not prevented. Investing in keeping people out of hospitals, not just treating them once they arrive, should be the real priority. ■

Prasad is a public health professional and former director at NITI Aayog

500 years later, replicas and road signs may fall, but Babur lives on

BY INVITATION

PARVATI SHARMA

In April 1526, Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi on the plains of Panipat, surprising the Hindustani army with his artillery and, even more so, with his cavalry's expert flanking manoeuvres, pressing Lodi's men upon themselves in such chaos and confusion that the battle was won by noon.

Half a millennium later, in May 2026, on the day BJP defeated Trinamool Congress in a victory some attributed to its own strategic deployments of Hindutva and the SIR, a video emerged on social media of a mob around a burning replica of the Taj Mahal, shouting "Tel lagake Dabur ka, naam mitado Babur ka".

Babur's conquest appears to have inflicted a wound on the Indian psyche, one that aches even today and will heal only when his very name is rubbed out. Any serious examination of history, however, makes it difficult to support this claim. By what logic, after all, is the Taj Mahal an example of brutal, religious oppression? There's only one way to make it so: the absurd argument, often touted by some right-wing ideologues, that the Taj Mahal wasn't built by Babur's dynasty at all, that it is actually an ancient temple.

This is also why the 'defence' of Mughal rule is often built on its cultural contributions to the Indian subcontinent: language and literature, fashion, cuisine and architecture, all with a deeply syncretic foundation. This framing is not immune to critique; Kapil Komireddi, for example, accused Indian historians of characterising Mughal rule as a "cultural exchange programme" (while properly damning European colonisation), thus allowing an unaddressed pain to fester — and now burst.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that he is right. Let us even grant that there is no difference between conquest that settles to govern and colonisation that rules to extract. In any case, the "cultural benefits of Mughal rule" argument is unlikely to convince the mob with its oily doggerel. Let us assume, then, that nothing good came of the Mughals, not even a railway line — only illegal demolitions, arbitrary taxes, and everyday assaults on one beleaguered community's dignity. Let us allow that this trauma will only be set right by erasing Babur's name.

But from where, exactly? It's too late to excise him from the voters' list. From textbooks, then, and street signs? The mob forgets: Babur exists despite and outside its chants. First in the life he lived, an extraordinary life by any measure. King at eleven, then throne-less vagabond; soldier, adventurer, gardener; avid drinker, conqueror, poet. Second, and even more indelibly, Babur exists in his Baburnama. However long the mob might wander with its matchboxes, anyone who wants may find Babur at any time, in his own words.

One of the first things Babur did on arriving in Agra, in the blistering May of 1526, was scout for a place for a garden, a charbagh of the style that would, one day, grace the Taj Mahal. With polemic to match Komireddi's, Babur had dismissed newly conquered Hindustan as a "place with little charm". There was no sense of inter-dining and civilised conversation, no symmetry in the buildings, no good fruit or bread in the markets. There was no good place to build gardens, either: "A few days after coming to Agra, I crossed the Jumna with this plan in mind… but everywhere I looked was so unpleasant and desolate that I crossed back in great disgust."

AH TAJ: How can the Taj Mahal be painted as an example of brutal, religious oppression?

He settled for what he had: dug a well, laid beds of rose and narcissus, set his gardeners tending melons and grapevines. Some years later, when Babur tasted the fruit and found it good, he wrote, "To have grapes and melons grown in this way in Hindustan filled my measure of content."

Babur did, after all, want to transform Hindustan — just not in the way the mob imagines. It wasn't a religion he wanted to replace but the literal landscape. When the Agra garden was laid, Babur wrote with relief: "Thus, in unpleasant and inharmonious India, marvellously regular and geometric gardens were introduced."

The word 'garden' occurs nearly 40 times in the Hindustan section of the Baburnama (as translated by W M Thackston); gardens that Babur made, visited or criticised. "By repeatedly returning… to his preoccupation with garden construction and embellishment," argues the historian Stephen Dale, Babur "reveals how profoundly important these structures were to him" — the ground in which his own idea of himself, a carrier of Timurid high culture, could flourish. By contrast, the same section has less than ten instances of the word 'mosque' (and no mention of any such building in Ayodhya).

What is the mob to make of this? After all, its grievances rest on the claim that Babur was a barbarian, iconoclast, destroyer of ancient worlds who built a masjid on a mandir, not that he transplanted fruit. Or perhaps that is the more unsettling fact? That Babur thought of gardens and freshly baked bread while they dream of arson and erasure? It's entirely consistent with the mob's insecurity that the real wound to its puny soul is inflicted by a patch of melons. ■

Sharma is an author whose work includes biographies of Jahangir and Akbar

WORD DROP

NEWSJACKING

Earlier this week, a candy most of us have tasted in childhood found itself at the centre of global diplomacy, after PM Modi gifted a pack of Melody to the Italian PM Meloni. As the reel went viral, its manufacturer Parle quickly went on social media, thanking the leaders. The move is part of a strategy that has been popular in brand communications for a while. Termed 'newsjacking', it is the art of inserting a brand, celebrity

iStock

or public figure into a trending news cycle to capture attention in real time. In the age of social media, it has become a staple of digital marketing and online discourse. Brands often use satire or clever wordplay to piggyback on everything from cricket matches to election results. Some campaigns succeed brilliantly, while others backfire for appearing insensitive or opportunistic.

INBOX

BONHOMIE HOPE

Apropos of 'BJP's Bengal…' (ATM, May 10), it's too early to hope for a bonhomie between Delhi-Dhaka after the regime change in Bengal. The action taken by India against infiltration will set the tone of future proceedings. The China factor will be an important factor in the relationship.

—**Chanchal Nandy,** Durgapur

Email your letters to the editor at *sunday.times@timesofindia.com* with 'Sunday Mailbox' in the subject line. Please mention your name and city

Tuck Frump and the rise of America's potty-mouth politics

RUMINATIONS

CHIDANAND RAJGHATTA

Once upon a time, American presidents spoke in polished paragraphs written by Ivy League speechwriters, with the occasional "my fellow Americans" tossed in for moral uplift. Today, its political discourse increasingly resembles the comment section under a viral wrestling video. This week, the phrase 'Tuck Frump', a spoonerism emblazoned on T-shirts and other merchandise, trended on X, the platform currently functioning as America's national sewage pit. Spoonerism is a literary device where the speaker accidentally — or in this case, wilfully and provocatively — swaps the initial sounds of two words. It is the linguistic equivalent of wearing your pants backward, except with more bile.

Tuck Frump joined a growing bipartisan dictionary of political obscenities that now stretches from 'Let's Go Brandon' (aimed at Biden) to 'Fuck ICE,' from 'MAGAts' to 'libtards', proving that in modern America, the First Amendment has apparently entered its potty-mouthed phase.

The rise of profanity in politics is no longer anecdotal; it is measurable. A recent analysis by The Washington Post found that about 93% of Trump's speeches in his second term contain at least one vulgar or insulting term, compared with roughly 40% during the early part of his first presidency. For a country that once blushed when Vice President Dan Quayle misspelled 'potato', this represents remarkable cultural growth.

Illustration by **Chad Crowe (USA)**

WTF! The bipartisan dictionary of obscenities is only growing

Trump, naturally, is the undisputed grandmaster of presidential profanity. His political rhetoric often sounds less like a State of the Union and more like a man yelling at a handyman who has messed up hanging the curtain rods. In one recent Truth Social post about the Strait of Hormuz crisis, he raged, "Open the Fuckin' Strait, you crazy bastards," at the Iranian leadership. At a Florida rally, frustrated with his sound system, he announced to supporters: "I'm screaming my ass off." Over the years, the US President has joyfully stress-tested the boundaries of public decorum, famously describing certain nations as "shithole countries" and another time assuring an adoring crowd that his political opponents were "full of shit."

White House allies insist all this is not vulgarity but "authenticity." Critics say it sounds like a man live-posting during road rage. Yet Trump is hardly alone in America's great bipartisan descent into the lexical gutter. Former President Joe Biden famously whispered to Barack Obama that passage of the Affordable Care Act was a "big f***king deal," accidentally broadcasting the phrase into a hot mic and political immortality. Later, Biden was caught on a hot mic calling a Fox News reporter a "stupid son of a bitch."

But while Biden leaned heavily on the trusty 'damn', Trump diversified like a true entrepreneur, sprinkling in 'bastard', 'bitch', 'bullshit', and going into a copulatory overdrive by bringing in the full F word into the presidential lexicon. He's urged congressional Republicans not to "f*** around with Medicaid," told Iran and Israel they "don't know what the f*** they're doing" regarding ceasefires, and warned Venezuela's Maduro not to "f*** around with the US."

Biden's Vice President Kamala Harris, too, has occasionally sprinkled profanity into speeches aimed at younger voters, while Democratic lawmakers increasingly deploy the F-word online as casually as previous generations used commas. Even Obama and Clinton are known to have cursed — mostly in private and at least when not being broadcast live. Cameras don't inhibit Trump.

Historians note that politicians have always cursed privately. Richard Nixon practically turned profanity into an art form, on the Watergate tapes, though transcripts politely replaced the outbursts with the now-legendary phrase 'expletive deleted'. Declassified tapes showed he called Indira Gandhi a witch and a bitch, even as he was consigned to the doghouse of history.

Political scientists say the internet rewards outrage, confrontation, and verbal flamethrowers. A Northeastern University analysis noted that politicians use profanity to project "authenticity" and "fighting spirit" in the social-media age. Public reaction remains divided. Some surveys show Americans are increasingly comfortable with profanity in everyday life, but many still dislike hearing elected officials curse. Even Trump critics often mirror each other stylistically. The man who helped normalise 'Crooked Hillary', 'Sleepy Joe', and 'bullshit' politics now inspires equally vulgar counter-slogans from opponents, including the dumbest president in history (who calls everyone else stupid). America's political culture increasingly resembles a national food fight, with everyone insisting the other side threw the first profanity.

The epidemic has touched India too, with Rishabh Pant recently dropping an F-bomb live on air, insisting "we (Lucknow SuperGiants) are a f***king good team" — even after getting losing nine out of 13 IPL games so far.

The broader irony is that politicians increasingly use profanity to sound like "ordinary people" at precisely the moment ordinary Americans are exhausted by politics. The result is a democracy in which candidates promise to "fight for the people" while sounding like angry sports fans arguing in the parking lot. ■

Issues unresolved, but Iran, US signal progress in peace talks

UAE Joins Saudis, Qatar In Urging Trump Not To Restart War

Senior US and Iranian officials said on Saturday they could be close to a breakthrough in talks to strike a draft deal, while remaining cautious about the chances of ending the war in the West Asia.

US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he was meeting with his negotiators to discuss Iran's latest offer and would likely decide by Sunday whether to resume the war, US media outlet Axios reported.

"I think one of two things will happen: either I hit them harder than they have ever been hit, or we are going to sign a deal that is good," Trump said.

The US President said he would meet with special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to discuss the proposal from Tehran. Vice President J D Vance, who is in Ohio, is likely to return to Washington to join the meeting.

Iran said gaps remain between the parties, and the dispute over its nuclear programme would not be part of the initial talks, but that it was finalising a 14-point framework for a deal. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei noted what he called "a trend towards rapprochement" but said "it does not necessarily mean that we and the US will reach an agreement on key issues".

Reuters

ISRAEL CONTINUES TO STRIKE LEBANON: Mourners at the funeral of medics killed in an Israeli strike on the southern town of Deir Qanoun En-Nahr on Friday, in Tyre, Lebanon. Six Lebanese paramedics were killed in two Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon in the span of 24 hours, Lebanon's health ministry said on Friday. On Saturday, the ministry said Israeli attacks had killed 3,123 people since March 2, decrying an overnight strike that damaged a hospital in the southern city of Tyre as "further proof of Israeli violation of humanitarian law"

Iran and Pakistan have submitted a revised proposal to the US to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, two Pakistani sources told Reuters on Saturday.

Sore points not on table?

Trump told Axios that he would only take a deal that covers issues like uranium enrichment and the fate of Iran's existing stockpile. The US and Iran are negotiating a letter of intent to end the war and commit to 30 days of more in-depth negotiations, Axios reported.

The Financial Times reported Saturday that mediators believe they're closing in on a deal to extend the ceasefire by 60 days that would include a gradual opening of the Strait of Hormuz.

It remains unclear how key differences, including the fate of Iran's nuclear programme and its calls for sanctions relief, will be addressed, with Baghaei saying those matters aren't currently on the table. The two sides will also need to agree on how the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial passageway for global energy supplies that has remained largely shuttered since the war began on Feb 28, should be administered.

Iran has rejected demands to give up its uranium and halt enrichment, while insisting that it has no intention of building an atomic bomb, and wants to levy fees on ships passing through Hormuz. Tehran is also demanding that the US release a "significant portion" of Tehran's assets that are blocked abroad as a first step.

Neighbours seek closure

The United Arab Emirates has made a more concerted push for an end to the Iran war in recent days, joining Saudi Arabia and Qatar in urging Trump to give negotiations a chance, according to several people familiar with the matter. The conversations were prompted by the countries' fears that any retaliation from Tehran, if hostilities resume, will plunge Gulf economies into chaos, the people said.

In separate calls with Trump, leaders of the three US allies said military action won't achieve America's long-standing goals with Iran, the people said, asking not to be named discussing sensitive matters. The White House didn't respond to a request for comment. Abu Dhabi's stance indicates a shift for a country that bore the brunt of Iran's attacks and has been more hawkish than its neighbours toward Tehran. BLOOMBERG, AFP

France bans Israeli min over 'unspeakable' Gaza flotilla detainee taunts

France banned Israeli national security minister **Itamar Ben Gvir** from entering the country, citing threats and violence against activists who were trying to get aid to Gaza by sea.

"The decision follows unspeakable actions directed at French and European citizens who were passengers in the Global Sumud flotilla," foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Saturday on X. While he said France didn't approve of the fleet, it won't tolerate "threats, intimidation and brutality" against its citizens.

The move comes amid a growing chorus of condemnation of the Israeli minister for the treatment of the international activists, who were detained after seeking to breach its naval blockade of Gaza. His social media posts have also sparked controversy in Israel, with one video showing him waving the nation's flag amid detained activists kneeling in rows with their heads on the ground and hands bound.

Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy all summoned Israel's ambassadors, with Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten calling Israel's treatment of the activists "dehumanizing." Italian PM Giorgia Meloni and foreign minister Antonio Tajani demanded an apology and said the protesters "are subjected to treatment that violates their dignity." BLOOMBERG

Green card? H-1Bs must prove worthy of 'status adjustment'

Lubna Kably

The Trump administration's latest move to recast adjustment of status as an 'extraordinary discretionary benefit' and push green card applicants towards consular processing abroad is expected to trigger immediate litigation, according to immigration attorneys. In fact, the policy could also disrupt the H-1B-to-green card pathway via adjustment of status, relied upon by lakhs of Indians.

The memo issued Friday by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) directs officers to treat adjustment of status as an 'extraordinary form of relief', and says applicants should generally pursue immigrant visas through US consulates abroad instead of obtaining green cards from within the US.

Kripa Upadhyay, partner at Buchalter, a law firm, said the memo is likely to be challenged soon in the courts, as it is in direct contravention of the Administrative Procedures Act, which calls for issue of the proposal, inviting comments and its review, before final rollout.

The scale of disruption could be massive. Doug Rand, former official at the US department of homeland security (DHS), says in a typical year the US approves more than one million people for green cards, roughly half of whom adjust status from within the US. "The purpose of this policy is exclusion," Rand said, warning that forcing applicants abroad could leave them vulnerable to the doctrine of consular non-reviewability, where visa denials by consular officers are difficult to challenge in court. Immigration attorneys warned that a buried footnote in the memo could fundamentally alter the treatment of dual-intent visa holders such as H-1B and L-1 (intra company transfer) workers.

IT'S ALL RED FOR IMMIGRANTS

Class of admission (Fiscal year 2023)	Total	Adjustments of status	New arrivals
Total, all immigrants	1,172,910	608,260	564,660
KEY CATEGORIES			
Immediate relatives of US citizens	551,590	315,830	235,760
Family-sponsored preferences	204,240	10,940	193,300
Employment-based preferences	196,760	146,880	49,890

With more than 12.6 lakh Indians, including dependants, waiting in employment-based green card categories, the policy has triggered anxiety across the Indian diaspora. Until now, eligible H-1B holders could file Form I-485 for adjustment of status and complete the green card process within the US itself. Ashwin Sharma, a Jacksonville-based immigration attorney, said the Trump administration appears to acknowledge dual intent on paper but undermines it through a footnote. "That specific footnote dictates that simply maintaining lawful status in a dual-intent non immigrant visa category is no longer sufficient on its own to warrant a favourable exercise of discretion."

"The policy now is to require these frequently vetted professionals to affirmatively submit additional discretionary evidence to prove they deserve to stay in the US rather than being arbitrarily forced abroad to file their immigrant application and face a massive consular backlog," he added.

Rajiv S Khanna, managing attorney at Immigration.com, said officers need to see affirmative records for why an applicant deserves to adjust status while in the US. "My immediate advice to Indian nationals with pending I-485 cases: do not withdraw. Build an affirmative record now of your taxes, your contributions, your family ties, your professional standing and other evidence of roots in the US. The Supreme Court's 2022 decision in Patel v. Garland stripped federal courts of jurisdiction to review most factual findings in adjustment cases. Whatever record you build at the USCIS level is effectively the only record that will ever matter. Prepare it carefully."

According to some media reports, factors such as national interest or economic benefit may also weigh in, in deciding if an applicant is eligible for adjustment of status. The alternative of consular processing for green card applicants is impractical — consulates in India are already backlogged with H-1B stamping interviews, the memo will result in delays, job-disruption, family-separation and hardship for green card applicants.

Kyiv says it hit Russia's key oil port, depot

Long-range Ukrainian drones hit oil facilities in Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, the latest in a series of strikes on the country's energy infrastructure.

Separately, Kyiv claimed a strike on a major petrochemicals facility deep into Russian territory. Ukraine's Special Operation Forces, working with the security and defence forces, targeted the Sheskharis oil terminal, the largest one on Russia's Black Sea coast, and the Grushovaya storage that supplies oil to the terminal, the military said.

Russia's oil-pipeline operator Transneft PJSC, which owns Sheskharis and Grushovaya, didn't respond to a request for a comment sent outside normal business hours. Previous attacks on Sheskharis in early April temporarily halted loadings there. Last month, the terminal shipped over 544,000 barrels of Russian crude oil per day. BLOOMBERG

Ukrainian strike on college in Russian-occupied town: Toll 18

The death toll from a Ukrainian strike on a college and its dormitory in a Russian-occupied town in eastern Ukraine has risen to 18, Russian officials said on Saturday. Launched overnight on Thursday to Friday, one of the deadliest Ukrainian drone barrages in months also wounded 42 in Starobilsk, the occupied Lugansk region, with some still remaining under the debris.

The strike has drawn a strong reaction from top Russian officials, with President Vladimir Putin ordering the army to prepare a response.

Ukraine denied targeting civilians and said it had hit a Russian drone unit stationed in the Starobilsk area. Russia's emergency ministry said that "two more bodies have been recovered from under the rubble. In total: 60 victims, of whom 18 have died."

Video shared by the ministry showed dozens of rescuers sifting through what remained of a section of the five-storey dormitory building, now reduced to rubble.

Most of those killed and missing were young women born between 2003 and 2008, according to a list of casualties published by the Moscow-backed governor of the Lugansk region, Leonid Pasechnik. "The region and the entire country share the fate of these people and the pain of their families," he said.

In Russia and on the occupied territories of Ukraine, a college is an equivalent of a vocational school, typically for students aged from 15 to 22 years. AFP

Reuters

Activists of Ukrainian right-wing movements attend a rally against what they say is an influx of migrant workers filling jobs left vacant by men drafted into the military, in central Kyiv, Saturday

Trump's red card: Cos fear biz disruptions

▶ Continued from page 1

The policy marks one of the most dramatic attempts yet by the Trump administration to curb not only illegal immigration but legal ones as well — a long-standing ideological goal of hardliners who view almost every immigration pathway as a loophole waiting to be closed.

For years, Indian engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, researchers and tech workers on H-1B visas have lived in a peculiar state of semi-permanent impermanence: legally employed, heavily taxed, often homeowners, raising US-born children — yet stuck in green card queues spanning decades because of country caps imposed by US immigration law.

The caps mean no single country can receive more than 7% of the total number of employment-based or family-sponsored Green Cards issued in a single fiscal year. Since the total number of Employment-Based Green cards is 140,000 annually, maximum annual allocation per country (whether India or Nepal or Botswana or Peru) is 9,800, which means applicants from smaller countries get through quicker, whereas Indians, more in number, get processed slowly.

Under the previous system, applicants could remain in the US while waiting for adjustment of status (AOS). The new memo upends that assumption. "An alien who is in the US temporarily and wants a Green Card must return to their home country to apply," USCIS spokesman Zach Kahler said, describing AOS within the US as an "extraordinary form of relief".

On immigration forums, and Reddit threads, Indian visa holders reacted with a mixture of disbelief, fury and exhaustion. "I'm sure we'll see clarifications... But the damage is the fear, uncertainty and doubt it creates, as with all similar policy moves in the recent past," one professional wrote, calling the USCIS memo "emotional sadism".

For Indian families, the disruption extends far beyond paperwork. Many children of H-1B holders have spent nearly their entire lives in the US. Some are weeks away from college admissions, advanced placement exams or high-school graduation. Parents fear being forced to uproot teenagers from American schools and relocate them to Indian cities they barely know while waiting indefinitely for consular processing. "As a scientist and immigrant who loves this country, I cannot think of worse ways to cripple American scientific competitiveness while other countries surge ahead," one scientist wrote on X.

> **Great to see the Trump administration close this outrageous loophole. Temporary status means temporary**
> **MARSHA BLACKBURN**
> Republican Senator

Another complaint is that the administration appears eager to welcome wealthy investors through proposals like Trump's much-publicised "Gold Card" residency idea, while making life progressively harder for middle-class professionals who arrived through legal channels.

Business groups, particularly in the technology and healthcare sectors, are warning that the policy could trigger severe disruptions for American employers dependent on foreign talent. Tech companies already struggling with labour shortages fear employees may simply relocate permanently to Canada, Europe or India rather than gamble on uncertain re-entry into the US. Hospital systems reliant on foreign-born doctors and nurses are also reportedly alarmed.

Democratic lawmakers reacted with predictable outrage. "The Trump administration is once again proving that they are not going after the 'worst of the worst.' Instead, they are blatantly attacking legal immigration, with family separation at the centre of its agenda. This new policy will rip apart families, spouses, and children from their parents," said New York lawmaker Grace Meng.

First HK astronaut joins mission to China space station

Hong Kong's first astronaut, a former cop with a doctorate in computer forensics, will join a Chinese mission to its space station on Sunday, in what the city's Chief Executive John Lee described as a "historic moment."

Lai Ka-ying, identified by China as Li Jiaying, the Mandarin transliteration of the astronaut's name

Lee congratulated Lai Ka-ying, a payload expert raised in the city, in a statement on Saturday, on her selection to join the Shenzhou-23 crew. She will be responsible for conducting experiments, scientific and applied research at China's Tiangong station. Lai and two others will lift off at 11.08pm Sunday. One of them will spend a year in space. China's year-long missions are an important step to future lunar and deep-space ambitions, said Macquarie University's Richard de Grijs. BLOOMBERG, AFP

SpaceX's Starship flight hits most targets in pre-IPO test

Starbase, Texas: SpaceX completed a largely successful test flight of its next-generation Starship rocket on Friday, deploying a clutch of mock satellites and executing a controlled splashdown in the Indian Ocean in a high-stakes debut of the newly upgraded vehicle as Elon Musk's company prepares to go public.

Starship, which SpaceX has spent $15 billion developing as a fully reusable spacecraft, is critical to Musk's goals of cutting launch costs, expanding his Starlink business and pursuing ambitions ranging from deep-space exploration to orbital data centers — all factored into his targeted $1.75 trillion IPO valuation.

Friday's launch marked SpaceX's 12th test flight of a Starship prototype since 2023 and the first of its V3 iteration, a major upgrade of both the cruise vessel and its Super Heavy booster, as well as the first blast-off from a launch pad specially designed for the new rocket.

AFP

This screengrab made from a SpaceX live feed shows Starship 39 rocket landing in the Indian Ocean on Friday

The towering vehicle, consisting of the upper-stage Starship astronaut vessel stacked atop a Super Heavy booster rocket, blasted off around 5.30pm (2230 GMT) from SpaceX facilities in Starbase, Texas, on the Gulf of Mexico near Brownsville. A live SpaceX webcast showed the rocketship, over 40 stories tall, climbing from the launch tower as the Super Heavy's cluster of 33 Raptor engines thundered to life in a ball of flames.

Minutes later, the two stages cleanly separated, leaving the Starship vehicle to soar on to its cruise phase despite the loss of one of its six engines, then release its simulated satellite payload before surviving a fiery atmospheric re-entry and splashdown. Its flight lasted just over an hour in all. The lower-stage Super Heavy came down separately in the gulf about six minutes after blast-off, as expected, but the booster rocket failed to complete a planned boost-back burn of its engines after separating from Starship.

SpaceX said before the launch it would not attempt a safe return landing or recovery of either the booster or the Starship upper stage, even if all else went as planned. REUTERS

China says mine co committed 'serious' breach as blast kills 82

Chinese authorities said Saturday preliminary findings showed a company whose coal mine exploded, killing 82 people, had committed "serious illegal violations", state media reported. "Preliminary judgment indicates that the coal mine enterprise involved committed serious illegal violations," authorities said in a press meet broadcast on state media CCTV.

Causes of the blast at a small operation in the city of Changzhi late on Friday are under investigation. President Xi Jinping has ordered nationwide efforts to curb such major accidents.

China has dramatically reduced coal mining fatalities in recent years, but the vast industry continues to juggle competing priorities. The govt has pushed output to a record to meet energy security demands, even as safety officials crack down on over-stressed facilities and blame mine owners and operators for accidents. BLOOMBERG, AFP

Measles outbreak kills 500+ B'desh kids

A measles outbreak in Bangladesh has killed more than 500 children, govt data showed Saturday, marking a deadliest surge in decades of the preventable disease. Hospitals in Dhaka have been overwhelmed with cases. Deaths are still rising, with 13 kids dying in the past 24 hours alone, even as the country rolls out a mass vaccination drive. AFP

WORLD DIGEST

AP

HEALING WITH A WAG AND A NUZZLE: Cincinnati Children's Hospital "facility dog" Hadley and hospital staff with 5-year-old patient Calvin Owens during a physical therapy visit at the hospital's patio earlier this month. Unlike volunteer therapy dogs, facility dogs — specially trained and full-time working — are bringing moments of comfort and joy to children's hospitals. Experts say the use of facility dogs is growing at children's hospitals across the United States as research continues to show benefits for young patients. Studies suggest even brief interactions can improve well-being, lower stress and pain levels, and help children feel more at ease in unfamiliar medical settings. AP

Uruguay records first death by euthanasia

A cancer patient in Uruguay became the first person to die by euthanasia in the small South American country on Friday, a medical source confirmed to AFP. Uruguay in Oct passed the so-called "Dignified Death" bill, making it the first country in Latin America to legalise assisted dying. The law allows assisted suicide for adult citizens or residents who are mentally competent and in the terminal stage of an incurable disease that causes them suffering.

French mother in custody for abandoning two boys

A court in Portugal on Saturday remanded in custody a French woman and her partner accused of abandoning her two young boys — aged four and five — on a roadside in the south. The court in Setubal ordered the 41-year-old woman and the 55-year-old man to be placed in pretrial detention.

Thousands evacuated due to failing chemical tank

Officials ordered tens of thousands of people to evacuate their homes in the Los Angeles suburb of Garden Grove on Friday due to a failing chemical tank that was likely to either leak or explode, possibly releasing toxic vapour into the air. The tank contained methyl methacrylate, a flammable, volatile chemical used in plastics and manufacturing.

Viral albino buffalo sold

A rare albino buffalo, which went viral for its uncanny resemblance to the US President Trump's signature hairstyle, has been sold ahead of the Eid al-Adha festival. Weighing 700kg, it was sold for 550 Taka per kg, its owner Zia Uddin Mairda told ANI.

Mayday! SA scientists identified hantavirus outbreak in 24hrs

Johannesburg: When South African infectious disease specialist Lucille Blumberg checked her email on the morning of May 1, while the country was celebrating the Labour Day holiday, an urgent message caught her attention.

A UK-based colleague, who monitors diseases in remote British overseas territories in the South Atlantic Ocean, had written about a passenger from a cruise ship, sailing thousands of miles away in the Atlantic, who had been evacuated and admitted to a Johannesburg hospital with suspected pneumonia. Others aboard the vessel were also sick.

Blumberg and other experts at South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases were suddenly thrown into the race to identify the cause of an outbreak aboard the Dutch cruise ship MV Hondius. Despite a holiday, "it got busy", she says. Within 24 hours, they had determined that the man's illness was caused by hantavirus, a rare rodent-borne virus.

But first, Blumberg and her colleagues had to rule out a host of other possible infections before narrowing down to the original cause. First, they thought it might be Legionella, a bacterium that causes a serious form of pneumonia, bird flu. "Legionella is well described in outbreaks in hotels and on cruise ships, and influenza certainly is." Tests on all those were negative. The experts also ran an extensive panel of tests for other respiratory diseases. Also, all negative.

The team then began looking more closely at bird watchers and had reportedly been to parts of South America where there were birds, but also rodents. That pushed the South African disease experts toward another theory: the rare, rodent-borne hantavirus infection, which is found in parts of South America. "It's a well-described, not common, virus in Chile and Argentina," Blumberg said.

There was also timely help — hantavirus experts from South America and the United States, facilitated by the WHO, the UN health agency, were a Zoom call away. "That was quite extraordinary," she said.

By then, it was Saturday morning. Blumberg called the head of the only laboratory in South Africa that can test for hantavirus. "I said, we want to do hanta, and she said, 'yeah, I'm coming.'" The tests, carried out on the sick man's blood samples, came back positive for hantavirus that afternoon. And the team did a second set of tests to confirm it. AP

2nd Ebola centre set ablaze, 18 flee

Eighteen people with suspected Ebola infections have left a health facility and are now unaccounted for as angry residents of a town at the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo attacked and burnt a tent that was part of the health centre where they were being treated for the virus. **Meanwhile, the African Union's health agency warned on Saturday that ten African countries are at risk of being affected by the Ebola virus, in addition to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. The countries listed by the agency are Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.** The Red Cross said three of its volunteers had died in the DRC after apparently contracting Ebola while on duty there in March. AFP

"I'VE ACTUALLY LEARNT A LOT FROM SOME BOWLERS IN THE TEAM. ESHAN MALINGA HAS BEEN THE FORM BOWLER AND HE'S MIXING UP DIFFERENT THINGS. SAKIB HUSSAIN IS THERE AS WELL. THEY HAVE BEEN A CAPTAIN'S DREAM."
—PAT CUMMINS | SRH skipper

IYER BREAKS PUNJAB JINX

Sunil Kumar

101 Unbeaten, match-winning knock off 51 balls by Shreyas Iyer, his maiden IPL hundred and fourth century in T20s. He has a highest of 147 for Mumbai.

TOP KNOCK: Shreyas Iyer celebrates after scoring a match-winning century against LSG on Saturday

Captain's Maiden IPL Hundred Helps PBKS End Six-Game Losing Streak

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: Punjab Kings have finally stemmed the rot and kept themselves alive in the race for an IPL playoff berth. After six consecutive losses had left them on the brink, PBKS skipper Shreyas Iyer and opener Prabhsimran Singh rediscovered the touch that had made the side look such a formidable outfit at the beginning of the season.

Iyer, unbeaten on 101 off 51 balls, completed his maiden IPL century with a heave over wide long-on off the last ball of the 18th over. It was the stroke that also sealed Punjab's win.

PBKS can still be knocked out on Sunday if Rajasthan Royals beat Mumbai Indians and move to 16 points, one more than last year's finalists Punjab.

On Saturday, Punjab were reduced to 22/2 in the third over while chasing 197 and a familiar script seemed to be unfolding. But Prabhsimran, who made 69 off 39 balls, and Iyer put on 140 off 76 balls for the third wicket to take the game away from LSG.

The pair complemented each other brilliantly, bringing out the big shots whenever necessary as a demotivated LSG attack began to look pedestrian. Prabhsimran was eventually dismissed by a superb yorker from left-arm medium-pacer Arjun Tendulkar, who finished with 1/36 on his LSG debut, but by then the match was all but over.

After Prabhsimran's dismissal, Iyer took it upon himself to take Punjab home.

Earlier, Josh Inglis was in his element, scoring 72 off 42 balls to guide LSG to 196/6. Inglis and Rishabh Pant, who made 26, added 65 for the fourth wicket as LSG fought back from 69/3 in the seventh over.

Inglis began with an assault on Arshdeep Singh, hitting him for four fours in the first over. But after LSG lost Arshin Kulkarni and Nicholas Pooran cheaply, Inglis allowed No. 4 Ayush Badoni to prosper for a while. Badoni smashed an 18-ball 43 and added 49 for the third wicket with Inglis. He attacked Azmatullah Omarzai, taking him for 24 runs in the fifth over, which allowed LSG to maintain their momentum in the powerplay. Badoni departed when Prabhsimran effected a smart stumping off Yuzvendra Chahal, with the batter's left leg still in the air.

From there, Inglis took over again, hitting Arshdeep for some quick runs. The Australian managed six fours and two sixes off the India pacer — a record Arshdeep will not be too proud of. Inglis reached his half-century off 28 balls, but lost Pant at the other end, with the LSG captain falling to Chahal, who finished with 2/25.

Inglis finally departed trying to take on part-time medium-pacer Shashank Singh, but his hoick found Iyer at straight long-on. Abdul Samad, unbeaten on 37 off 20 balls, managed a couple of big hits, but LSG failed to go past 200.

SCOREBOARD

LSG: J Inglis c Iyer b Shashank 72, A Kulkarni c Prabhsimran b Omarzai 0, N Pooran b Jansen 2, A Badoni st Prabhsimran b Chahal 43, R Pant c Jansen b Chahal 26, A Samad not out 37, M Choudhary c (sub) Dubey b Jansen 1, A Tendulkar not out 5; **Extras: (lb 2, w 8) 10; Total: (for 6 wkts in 20 overs) 196; FoW:** 1-16, 2-20, 3-69, 4-134, 5-169, 6-172; **Bowling:** Arshdeep 3-0-52-0, Omarzai 3-0-29-1, Jansen 4-0-33-2, Chahal 4-0-25-2, Vyshak 3-0-26-0, Shashank 3-0-29-1.

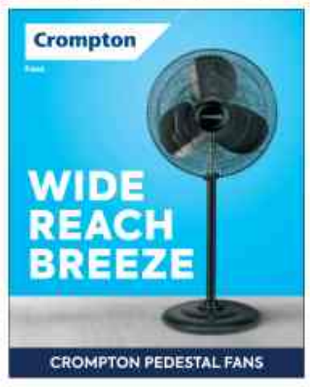
PBKS: P Arya c Tendulkar b Shami 0, P Singh lbw b Tendulkar 69, C Connolly b Shami 18, S Iyer not out 101, S Shedge not out 9; **Extras: (w 3) 3; Total: (for 3 wkts in 18 overs) 200; FoW:** 1-0, 2-22, 3-162; **Bowling:** Shami 4-0-45-2, Prince 3-0-32-0, Mohsin 4-0-48-0, Rathi 3-0-39-0, Tendulkar 4-0-36-1.

Result: **PBKS won by 7 wickets.**

375 Runs scored by Shreyas Iyer at an average of 125, including a hundred and four fifties in six innings at a strike-rate of 192.3, the most by a batter in successful chases in this IPL

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
RCB	14	9	5	0	0.783	18
GT	14	9	5	0	0.695	18
SRH	14	9	5	0	0.524	18
PBKS	14	7	6	1	0.309	15
RR	13	7	6	0	0.083	14
KKR	13	6	6	1	0.011	13
CSK	14	6	8	0	-0.345	12
DC	13	6	7	0	-0.871	12
MI	13	4	9	0	-0.510	8
LSG	14	4	10	0	-0.740	8



Wankhede set for Sooryavanshi show

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Mumbai: Desperate to seal the final playoffs spot, Rajasthan Royals will look to go full throttle against the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

While RR's playoff push will be closely tracked, the biggest attraction for Mumbai's cricket lovers will be 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's maiden outing at the Wankhede. Sooryavanshi's fearless stroke-play has left the cricketing world stunned.

Enjoying a sensational second IPL season, the left-hander has smashed 579 runs in 13 matches at an astonishing strike rate of 236.32, including three fifties and a hundred.

In his last outing, the 'boy wonder' hammered a breathtaking 93 off just 38 balls to help RR chase down 221 against Lucknow Super Giants with ease. An encore on Sunday could not only take Rajasthan into the playoffs but also delight a city that once produced a teenage batting prodigy named Sachin Tendulkar.

Lavishing praise on Sooryavanshi, RR assistant coach Trevor Penny said the youngster "lives in his own bubble" and added that he is "unlike any player" he has seen in four decades in cricket.

"He's just such a pleasant boy, very confident and excited every day to practice and play. We don't really have to talk to him much. He practices hard and then goes out and enjoys himself. In 40 years of cricket, I haven't seen that before," Penny said on Saturday.

Asked how RR were protecting the teenager from the growing hype around him, Penny said the franchise had put a strong support system around him.

WEATHER 33°C

5 hundreds have been scored by Rajasthan Royals batters against Mumbai Indians — 2 by Yashasvi Jaiswal and 1 each by Jos Buttler, Yusuf Pathan and Ben Stokes.
—**Stats:** Rajesh Kumar

Kohli refuses handshake with Head after spat

Hyderabad: Tempers flared between **Virat Kohli** and Travis Head in the IPL as the former Indian captain refused to shake hands with the Australian batter after Sunrisers Hyderabad handed Royal Challengers Bengaluru a crushing 55-run defeat.

The two exchanged heated words when Kohli opened for Bengaluru, with the side looking to chase down a daunting target of 256. During the exchange, a visibly angry Kohli was seen gesturing towards Head to come and bowl.

Kohli also mockingly made the 'Impact Player' substitution gesture, a reference to Head, who is primarily a batter, often being replaced by Hyderabad for a specialist bowler after the destructive opener's batting stint is done.

Head did not have much time to take Kohli up on his invite, as the Bengaluru opener fell soon after, scoring 15 off 11 balls. The Australian, however, bowled an over later in the game and dismissed Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar. As the teams lined up to shake hands after the match, Head held out his hand but Kohli looked straight ahead and walked past him. AGENCIES

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KKR on lookout for an opening

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Kolkata: This edition of the IPL has produced many stunning twists — Punjab Kings' dramatic meltdown, Rajasthan Royals' blow-hot-blow-cold campaign and Kolkata Knight Riders' remarkable recovery after being on the brink of exit, to name a few.

These twists have kept the league alive right up to the last day on Sunday, with one qualifying spot up for grabs. KKR will be taking on Delhi Capitals at the Eden Gardens here in the final game of this stage. The two teams will be keeping an eye on the afternoon match between Mumbai Indians and Rajasthan Royals. If Royals win the game, KKR and DC will be playing a dead rubber.

That would depend on whether Royals beat Mumbai Indians in the day's first match. A win for Royals would take them to 16 points which will put it beyond KKR who are sitting on 13 points. If MI stun Royals, KKR will still have a window to sneak into the playoffs which was unimaginable when they failed to win a single game in their first six matches.

Punjab Kings' victory over Lucknow Super Giants on Saturday not only knocked Delhi Capitals out of the race, but also left KKR with a Herculean task. Given the difference in net run rate between PBKS (.309) and KKR (.011), the latter have to beat DC by a huge margin, provided Rajasthan Royals lose to Mumbai Indians. If KKR manage to pull it off, it will be the highlight of their riveting revival and will surely install them as a formidable force in the qualifiers.

KKR head coach Abhishek Nayar, however, is trying to not sleep over it. "We can control only the controllables," he said.

TODAY'S FACE-OFF
KKR vs DC
TV TIME: 7.30 PM
STAR SPORTS / JIOHOTSTAR
HEAD TO HEAD
KKR 20 | DC 15
LAST FIVE MATCHES
KKR W W L W W
DC W W L L W
VENUE: KOLKATA
WEATHER 31°C
ODDS
KKR 8/10 | DC 6/5

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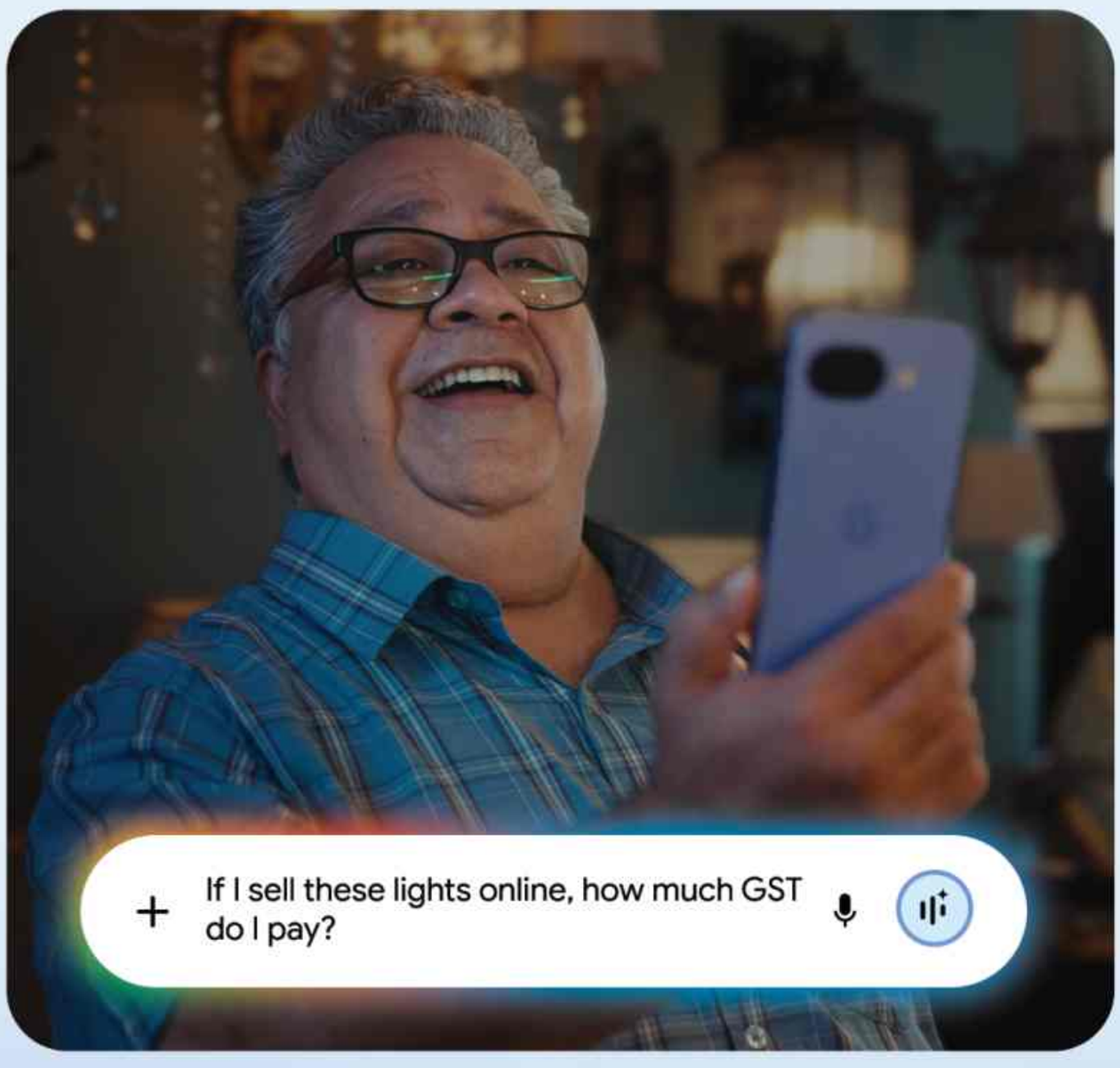

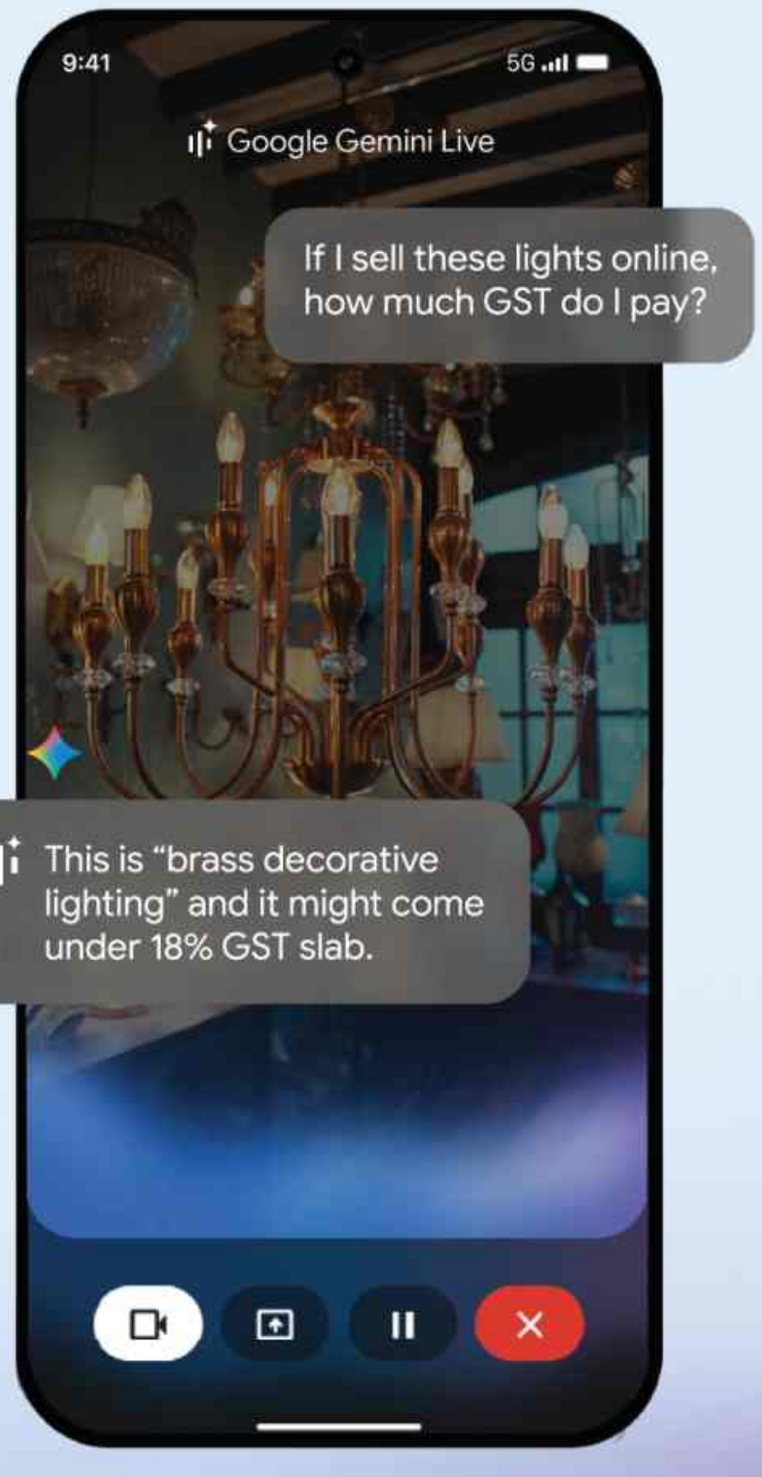
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THE RISE AND RISE OF JODAR

Teen Goes From College Courts To Roland Garros Centre Stage

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Paris: Treat Huey, coach at the University of Virginia, invited Somdev Devvarman, a sharp tennis mind and close friend, to Jeddah for the Next Gen ATP Finals last December, where he was travelling with Rafael Jodar, then a UVA player. It didn't take Devvarman long to understand why the 40-year-old coach was so excited, and within months the rest of the tennis world was watching it unfold in real time.

The 19-year-old Jodar began 2026 ranked No. 168 in the world. He broke into the top 100 following a run from qualifying to the round of 32 at the Miami Open. The Spa-

FRENCH OPEN

niard carried that momentum onto clay, claiming his maiden ATP Tour title in Marrakech before reaching the semifinals of the Barcelona Open. He followed that up with a quarterfinal run at the Madrid Masters, where a statement victory over Joao Fonseca underlined his status as one of the standout players of his generation.

At the Rome Masters, Jodar added another impressive win, this time over 20-year-old American Learner Tien, ensuring that by the time he arrived at Roland Garros for the French Open, which begins Sunday, he would be seeded at a Grand Slam for the first time. "I just try to play my tennis in all the tournaments, try to impose my game," the 6 ft 3' pro said of his rapid rise. "If things are not going well, I try to accept the situation and be aware that I have solutions to fix what's going on in the match."

AFP

IN FOCUS: Rafael Jodar

The men's draw is headlined by Jannik Sinner, whose form gauge currently reads red-hot. Ben Shelton, the fifth seed, sits in his quarter. Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime and Daniil Medvedev, seeded four and six respectively, are the marquee names in the top half of the draw. In the bottom half are Novak Djokovic, the 24-time major winner battling an ageing body, and second seed Alexander Zverev.

Jodar, seeded 27th, finds himself in the fourth quarter of the draw. He opens against American Aleksandar Kovacevic, the 27-year-old world No. 94, one of the few one-handed backhands in the top-100. Should Jodar navigate the early rounds, he could face seventh-seeded American Taylor Fritz in the third round. Fonseca, the other 19-year-old seed at No. 28, one behind the Spaniard, opens against French qualifier Luka Pavlovic.

It was Jodar's mentality that first caught the attention of Huey and the University of Virginia staff as they scouted players during the summers of 2023 and 2024, when the Spaniard won the US Open junior title.

"There wasn't one day where he came to practice and it was not serious for him. That hunger to keep getting better and keep working every single day was evident," Huey said. "It was amazing to see how he worked. He wasn't the greatest volleyer when he first came to school, but he was like, I need to get better, I'm going find ways to get better."

When Devvarman received the call to join Huey in Jeddah, it was curiosity as much as friendship that drew the former India No. 1, ranked as high as 62 in the world 15 years ago. Besides the opportunity to catch up with Huey, at whose wedding he was best man, Devvarman wanted to see firsthand how much the game had changed.

Devvarman, 41, explained that when players assess someone rising through the ranks, the benchmark conversation usually revolves around the top 100. "I watched a practice session, and five minutes into that one practice, I was like, this is a different level," Devvarman said. "I saw the way the workouts were done, the way the practices were done, I saw the intensity in the eyes. The second you see all of these things you realize that it's different."

Before boarding his flight home a little before Christmas, Devvarman left his friend with a prediction. "Not top-100, it is top-10 and the question is how quick!"

Crowd of contenders in women's draw

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Paris: Unlike the men's draw at Roland Garros, which in the absence of two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz feels largely one-dimensional, the women's field is stacked with genuine contenders.

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka begins her pursuit of a maiden French Open title against Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro, but the road ahead quickly thickens. A potential round-of-16 clash against four-time major winner Naomi Osaka or teenage sensation Iva Jovic looms, while fifth seed Jessica Pegula shapes up as a likely quarterfinal opponent.

Defending champion Coco Gauff is seeded to set up a rematch of last year's final against Sabalenka in the semi-finals. Gauff opens against left-hander Taylor Townsend while Amanda Anisimova, returning after a spell out with a wrist injury, could emerge as a quarterfinal threat.

Four-time Roland Garros champion Iga Swiatek, who anchors the top quarter of the bottom half, faces perhaps the most treacherous route of all if she is to add another Coupe Suzanne Lenglen to her collection. Jelena Ostapenko, who holds a commanding 6-0 head-to-head record over the Pole, could await in the third round. Marta Kostyuk is a possible fourth-round opponent, before a potential rematch with Elina Svitolina, who beat Swiatek in a bruising WTA 1000 semifinal in Rome.

Second seed Elena Rybakina, the Australian Open champion, possesses the firepower to blast through the draw, but the section around her is hardly forgiving. The 2021 champion Barbora Krejcikova and former finalists Jasmine Paolini and Karolina Muchova are lurking nearby ahead of a possible quarterfinal showdown with eighth seed Mirra Andreeva.

Biryukov battles past Ivashka to clinch title

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Syed Asif

CHAMPION: Petr Bar Biryukov

Bengaluru: Midway through the SM Krishna Memorial Open final against Ilya Ivashka on Saturday, Petr Bar Biryukov looked exhausted. The Russian struggled physically in the second set due to leg cramps. However, the fourth seed , ranked world No. 335, dug deep and found another gear to prevail 7-6 (0), 4-6, 6-4 in two hours and one minute to claim his maiden ATP Challenger title.

"In the second set, I thought I would die," said the 24-year-old, who lost in the opening round of the Karnataka Open last week. "When you win tournaments like this,

SMK MEMORIAL

your ranking improves, so I will get more opportunities to play bigger events," he added.

Biryukov's biggest weapon throughout the tournament was his booming serve, which consistently rattled his opponents. However, full credit goes to Ivashka, whose penetrating groundstrokes troubled the Russian. Biryukov, who fired 14 aces in the match, dominated the tiebreak and sealed the opening set after the Belarusian sent a backhand long.

The momentum shifted in the second set. Two consecutive double faults from a visibly tired Biryukov in the fifth game handed Ivashka, who had a career-high ranking of 40 in June 2022, the first break of the match and a 3-2 lead, helping him force a decider. The final set was not just about big serves though Biryukov struck eight aces in the decider. The Russian had greater punch on his groundstrokes while Ivashka continued to produce winners of his own, making it an even contest.

But at 30-all in the 10th game, Ivashka committed two costly unforced errors, including a simple volley at the net, allowing Biryukov to clinch a hard-fought title.

ADIL-MUKUND WIN

The Indian pair of Adil Kalyanpur and Mukund Sasikumar bagged the doubles title. They claimed a 6-7 (3), 6-4, 10-3 win over the Russia-Kazakhstan pair of Biryukov and Grigoriy Lomakin in the doubles final, ending Biryukov's chance of claiming a double.

SNAP SHOTS

Zee enters fray for FIFA WC rights

Zee network has made a formal offer to FIFA for the World Cup 2026 rights and held talks with officials from the governing body of world football during its recent visit to India, reports **Marcus Mergulhao**. FIFA has struggled to find a broadcast partner for India since there is a mismatch between what the governing body wants and what broadcasters in the country are willing to offer. According to reports, Zee Entertainment Enterprises is planning to return to the sports broadcasting space, which it left more than a decade ago. The FIFA World Cup 2026 could emerge as an attractive product to relaunch itself and attract eyeballs. TNN

Marcinko wins first career title: Croatian world number 76 Petra Marcinko on Saturday won the first title of her career on the WTA tour, beating Anhelina Kalinina in the final of the Rabat clay-court tournament. The 29-year-old Ukrainian retired while trailing Marcinko 6-2, 3-0.

Bhambri & Venus end runners-up: Yuki Bhambri and his New Zealand partner Michael Venus finished runners-up at the Geneva Open in Geneva on Saturday. The third-seeded Indo-Kiwi pair lost 6-3, 6-7(7), 7-10 to Romain Arneodo of Monaco and Australia's Marc Polmans.

Pragg draws with Vachier-Lagrave: R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France even as the race for the title tightened at the end of the penultimate round of the Super Chess Classic in Bucharest, Romania. The clash between overnight leaders Fabiano Caruana of United States and Vincent Keymer of Germany ended in a draw while Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan scored his second victory on the trot over Dutchman Jorden Van Foreest.

Pranavi tied for eighth spot: Pranavi Urs carded a two-under to be T-8 at the Lalla Meryem Cup in Rabat, Morocco. Pranavi had a total score of five-under par (70-71). Leader Kelsey Bennett was at 13-under par (68-65). Diksha Dagar made the cut after finishing the round at T-28 with a total of 1-under par. Hitaashee Bakshi and Avani Prashanth missed the cut.

Talwar stays inside Top-20: Saptak Talwar carded 67-70 to easily make the cut at the Danish Challenge Open in Odense, Denmark. He had a double bogey on Par-4 16th and a bogey on the 17th to drop to T-16.

Yuvraj makes cut: Yuvraj Sandhu (70-68) made the cut, while Shubhankar Sharma (70-72) missed the weekend at the Soudal Open near Antwerp, Belgium. Sandhu fired a second round of 68 trise to T-51 and make the cut. South Africa's Zander Lombard and France's Tom Vaillant shared the halfway lead.

Vinesh to participate in trials: Delhi HC

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New Delhi: It is "necessary" that Vinesh Phogat be allowed to participate in the upcoming Asian Games selection trials, the Delhi high court said in its order made public on Saturday. Allowing the celebrated grappler to participate in the trials, the HC also sharply criticised the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) selection policy as "exclusionary" and "unfair", particularly for athletes returning after a maternity break.

A bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and justice Tejas Karia permitted Vinesh to

WRESTLING

participate in the trials scheduled for May 30-31 while also directing procedural safeguards to ensure transparency.

HC agreed to the suggestion of the sports minister, represented by advocate Udit Dedhiya, that the trials be video-recorded by the WFI, while one independent observer each from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) are present during the process.

Bagan withdraw players

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Panaji: India coach Khalid Jamil has been left with a rickety squad of just 17 players for the Unity Cup after Mohun Bagan SG asked its players to return home from the national football team camp in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Jamil is preparing the team for the four-nation Unity Cup in England. The team had assembled for a day's training camp, but seven Bagan players were told by their club not to attend training later in the day and instead pack their bags for home.

"The players were at home at the end of the season and tickets were sent directly to them by AIFF," a senior official told TOI. "The tournament is played outside the FIFA international window and clubs are not duty-bound to release players. If any player gets injured, there will be no compensation. AIFF hasn't helped us in any manner, and it will be a risk to release players at this stage." The official FIFA international match window is from June 1-9. India are set to face Jamaica on May 27, while Nigeria take on Zimbabwe on May 26. The winners will contest the final on May 30, with the losing sides playing the third-place playoff.

Three of the seven Bagan players -- Lalengmawia Ralte, Sahal Abdul Samad and Anirudh Thapa – form an important part of the midfield. With Ashique Kuruniyan injured, Jamil is left with Jeakson Singh, PN Noufal and Ricky Shabong. Bagan goalkeeper Vishal Kaith, defender Abhishek Singh Tekcham and forwards Manvir Singh and Liston Colaco are all experienced campaigners

To add to Jamil's woes, East Bengal have advised Anwar Ali not to travel due to the injury he picked up against Inter Kashi in the final game of Indian Super League. Bagan's refusal means Jamil will have to make do with whoever is available. Goalkeeper Hrithik Tiwar will replace Vishal Kaith while those players who had obtained visas earlier will be considered.

Gurindervir sets 100m NR at 10.09s

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Ranchi: The second day of the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition proved to be a defining day for Indian athletics as three national records were created and major milestones were breached at Birsa Munda Stadium, Morabadi, here on Saturday.

Gurindervir Singh first broke the 100m national record in the final to win the event in 10.09s, becoming the first Indian to dip below 10.10s. It was also enough to help him qualify for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Then it was Vishal TK of Tamil Nadu who became the first from the country to dip below the 45-second mark in the 400m when he ran 44.98s in the final. However, he missed the CWG qualifying mark by just 0.02s.

Finally, Tejaswin Shankar lit up the evening by climbing the 8,000-point mark in the men's decathlon as he accumulated a total of 8057 points to not only better the national record but also qualify for the CWG, for which the qualifying mark was 7787 points.

Results Men: 100m: Gurindervir Singh (Rel) 10.09 (NR), Animesh Kujur (Odi) 10.20 secs, Pranav Pramod (Rel) 10.29 secs; **400m:** Vishal TK (TN) 44.98 secs (MR improved his own time of 45.12 secs), Rajesh Ramesh (TN) 45.31 secs, Jay Kumar (UP) 45.47 secs; **Decathlon:** Tejaswin Shankar (Rel) 8057 points (NR), Thowfeeq N (NCOE Trivandrum) 7530 points, Gokul KR (Navy) 7157 points. **Women: 100m:** Sudeshna H (Mah) 11.56 secs, Giridharani Ravikumar (TN) 11.58 secs, Tamanna (Har) 11.62 secs; **400m:** Vithya Ramjaj (TN) 52.22 secs, Ansa Babi (All India Police) 53.07 secs, Prachi (JSW) 53.26 secs; **1500m:** Pooja (JSW) 4:11.34, Ankita (Utk) 4:12.28, Anju (Har) 4:21.26; **Javelin throw:** Shilpa Rani (Har) 56.46m, Annu Rani (UP) 55.61m, Rashmi K (Andhra) 54.85m; **Shot put:** Krishna Jayashankar (Rel) 17.35m, Yogita (Har) 16.82m, Shiksha (Rel) 16.61m; **Pole vault:** Baranica Elangovan (TN) 4.10m (MR), Nitika Anup (MP) 4.10m, Krishna Rachan (Rly sports) 3.90m; **Triple jump**: Niharika Vashisht (Pun) 13.64m (MR), Bhairabi Roy (Rly sports) 13.28m, Mallala Anusha (Andhra) 13.28m.

KSCA set to begin stadium upgradation process

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) has taken firm steps towards upgrading the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, including increasing the seating capacity to 55,000. KSCA president Venkatesh Prasad, outlining the plans, stated: "Apart from ensuring international cricket returns to the stadium,

CRICKET

upgrading it was one of the main agendas in our manifesto during the elections. We have started work in that direction."

After the KSCA issued an expression of interest in April for architectural and structural design, more than 30 firms expressed interest, of which three have been shortlisted, according to Prasad.

"We have shortlisted three firms and will invite them shortly to present their blueprint. We will then put it forth before the managing committee, the state govt, and then take it forward," Prasad said adding that the upgradation will be in phases.

The former India pacer, addressing the need to upgrade the stadium, pointed out, "The stadium is more than 50 years old and currently seats about 32,000 people. Of these seats, after allocating passes for KSCA members and others, only approximately 25,000 tickets are available for the general public during major matches. For a rapidly growing city like Bengaluru, this limited public seating falls short of meeting the high demand."

Viaan powers B'lore into semis

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Viaan Joshi put up an all-round show to power Bangalore Sports Club into the semifinals with a six-wicket victory against Engrades Cricket Club in the KSCA U-16 inter-club tournament here recently.

Sent in to bat, Engrades was restricted to 160 in 35.5 overs. Skipper Samvit

U-16 INTER-CLUB

Shastri waged a lone battle with a 74-ball 72. For Bangalore, Sangham Singh led the attack with a three-wicket haul.

In reply, Bangalore rode on Viaan's unbeaten half-century to chase down the target in 28.1 overs. Viaan stitched together the highest partnership with opening partner and skipper Tanshh Krishna (31) — scoring 82 off 84 deliveries. Meanwhile, Rajajinagar Cricketers, Spartons SC and RVCE Gymkhana won their matches to complete the last-four lineup.

Brief scores (quarterfinals): Engrades CC: 160 in 35.5 overs (Samvit Shastri 72; Krishna 2-30, Viaan Joshi 2-32, Sangam Singh 3-18) lost to **Bangalore SC: 162/4 in 28.1 overs** (Viaan 87 n.o, Tanshh Krishna 31; Tanish Menghani 2-23).

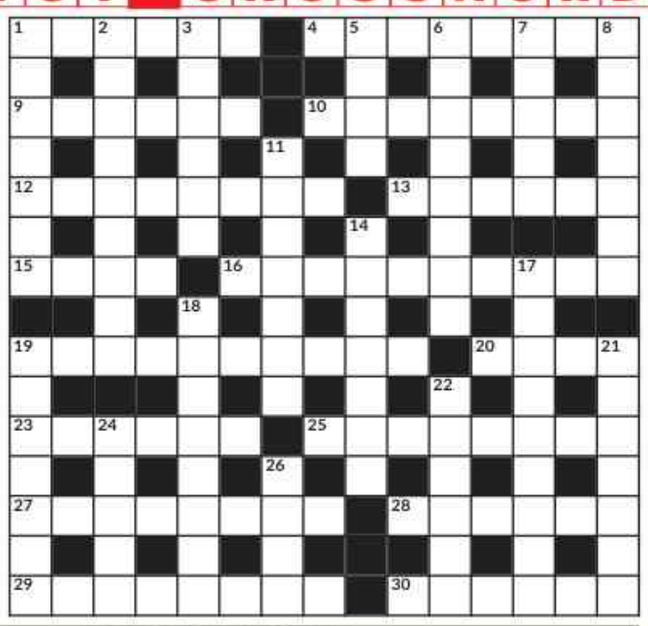
City Gymkhana: 154 in 44.4 overs (Siddharth HS 43, Gagan Y 28; Arnav Dere 2-24, Jeevan Krishna 3-21, M Neeraj 2-31) lost to **Rajajinagar Cricketers: 155/3 in 33.2 overs** (Niranjan Ashok 50, Rajveer Mehta 45 n.o).

Herons CC: 91 in 32.4 overs (Shwetansh RK 3-25, Tanish Bennuri 4-3) lost to **Spartons SC: 97 for no loss in 13 overs** (Hrithik Polin 53 n.o, Vastvik Sharma 36 n.o). **RVCE Gymkhana: 207/9 in 50 overs** (Skandha Shetty 35, Chirayu Vishesh 64 n.o, Tupakula Vikranth 28; Rahul Jena 2-34, Vignesh Subhramaniyan 3-46, Arjun Bharadwaj 3-40) bt **Young Lions Club: 167 in 45.2 overs** (Deekshith Gowda 25, Kushal Gowda 34, Shivaraj R 53; Chirayu 3-33, Narayan Dadhwal 2-7).

THE TOI CROSSWORD

CROSSWORD No. TCC#0273

The **TOI Crossword contest** is on a short break, but the crossword itself will continue to be featured in The Sunday Times of India, so that you can continue to relish the challenge every week. **Stay tuned!**



The Times of India CROSSWORD EVERY SUNDAY

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

1 Wild flower dangerous to birds? (6)
4 Loans saved can make a move (8)
9 Visit but speak without entering? (4,2)
10 Always faithful? (8)
12 Shocking bounders caused perjury to be committed (8)
13 Puzzle set in game (6)
15 Spot a weak type (4)
16 Edifice with strong beams (10)
19 Not left behind; in fact well in front (5,5)
20 Farm boss (4)
23 Give a plain description of French capital (6)
25 The offer of money may make him cross (8)
27 A survey not repeated (4-4)
28 It's not certain the doctor will come in the storm (6)
29 Global degree of freedom (8)
30 Quiet place for a school break (6)

Down

1 Concentrated on the film? (7)
2 We will shortly be having mixed gin. Good health! (9)
3 Frenchman who couldn't adapt to a new regime? (6)
5 An opening celebration or its finale (4)
6 A drink - Ben has it as a cocktail (8)
7 Sound as a bell (5)
8 The estate agent's lying (7)
11 The pleasure of dividing five hundred and eight by fifty (7)
14 One who cribs in an exam upsets a teacher (7)
17 Aunt Mabel when upset is beyond control (9)
18 Refuse to agree to project (5,3)
19 Neat combination of cardinal and count (3,4)
21 Fools assume the solutions (7)
22 Where the batman stands about in case (6)
24 In fact a point of view (5)
26 Heavy metal star player (4)

QUICK CLUES

Across

1 East African hunting expedition (6) 4 Transitory (8)
9 Despot (6) 10 Raise objections to (8)
12 Uncompromising (4-4) 13 Auctioneer's mallet (6)
15 A citrus fruit (4) 16 On top of everything else (2,3,2,3) 19 Be dismissed (3,3,4) 20 Splendid display (4) 23 Sound of explosion (6) 25 Intimidate (8)
27 Dislike (8) 28 Burning (2,4) 29 British premier 1868 and 1874-80 (8) 30 Nothing more than (6)

Down

1 Bag for schoolbooks (7) 2 On the contrary (3,4,2)
3 Cause lasting resentment (6) 5 Obtrusively bright (4)
6 Rapturous (8) 7 Particular form of expression (5)
8 Army commander (7) 11 Uncertain (2,5)
14 Stonework (7) 17 Simultaneously (2,3,4)
18 Attractive aura (8) 19 Wreath of flowers as decoration (7) 21 Earthenware vessels (7) 22 Brief shooting pain (6) 24 Newspapers (5) 26 Thwart (4)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC

B	A	T	T	E	R	S	■	D	R	O	U	G	H	T
E	■	E	■	N	■	K	■	I	■	U	■	O	■	I
A	S	S	E	G	A	I	■	S	A	T	A	N	I	C
R	■	T	■	L	■	R	■	P	■	R	■	D	■	K
O	S	A	K	A	■	T	H	E	R	E	■	F	O	R	E
U	■	T	■	N	■	■	■	L	■	■	■	L	■	T
T	R	E	A	D	M	I	L	L	■	B	E	A	D	S
■	■	■	■	E	■	N	■	E	■	U	■	■	■	■
R	E	C	U	R	■	T	I	D	A	L	W	A	V	E
E	■	A	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	L	■	C	■	G
L	A	S	T	W	O	R	D	S	■	F	O	R	G	O
A	■	T	■	I	■	J	■	A	■	I	■	Y	■	I
T	R	O	U	N	C	E	■	G	O	G	G	L	E	S
E	■	F	■	C	■	C	■	A	■	H	■	I	■	T
D	E	F	L	E	C	T	■	N	O	T	I	C	E	S

QUICK

D	I	S	T	A	N	T	■	R	E	F	L	E	C	T
E	■	P	■	R	■	I	■	E	■	R	■	L	■	R
F	R	A	U	G	H	T	■	C	H	I	C	A	G	O
I	■	N	■	Y	■	L	■	I	■	A	■	S	■	T
C	L	I	M	B	■	E	U	P	H	R	A	T	E	S
I	■	E	■	A	■	■	■	I	■	■	■	I	■	K
T	O	L	E	R	A	B	L	E	■	L	U	C	K	Y
■	■	■	■	G	■	U	■	N	■	A	■	■	■	■
P	O	P	P	Y	■	C	U	T	A	N	D	R	U	N
U	■	R	■	■	■	H	■	■	■	D	■	H	■	E
B	O	O	M	E	R	A	N	G	■	O	W	I	N	G
L	■	F	■	V	■	R	■	E	■	F	■	Z	■	L
I	N	F	L	A	M	E	■	C	O	N	S	O	L	E
S	■	E	■	D	■	S	■	K	■	O	■	M	■	C
H	A	R	V	E	S	T	■	O	D	D	M	E	N	T

Siege Courageous best

Bengaluru: Prasanna Kumar-trained Siege Courageous — to be ridden by Trevor Patel — has the best chance to win the HH Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Cup, the main event at the summer races here on Sunday.

1. The Beautiful Babe Plate 1400M: Stud Poker 1, Ihadath 2. **2. The Ministerial Plate 1100M:** Atman 1, Nimbus Speed 2. **3. The Pendragon Plate (Div-II) 1200M:** Annabelle 1, Zephyrine 2. **4. The Alekona Plate 1600M:** Glorious strides 1, Azalea 2. **5. The VT Velu Memorial Trophy 1200M:** Fortis 1, Small Dreams 2. **6. The HH Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Cup 1400M:** Siege Courageous 1, Zuccaro 2. **7. The Commonwealth Day Plate 1200M:** Mystikos 1, Breeze Bluster 2. **8. The Pendragon Plate (Div-I) 1200M:** Scent Of Rani 1, Jade Mountain 2.

HORSE RACING

Day's best: Glorious Stride. **Jackpot:** 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 **Mini Jackpot:** 5, 6, 7 & 8. **First Treble:** 3, 4 & 5 **Second Treble:** 6, 7 & 8.

Margaretta triumphs: The Mumbai raider — Margaretta — piloted by young Vivek, came up trumps in the Lt Col Desraj Cup, the main event run over a distance of 1,600 metres, at the summer races in Bengaluru on Saturday. TNN

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Padmapriya bags double

Karnataka's Padmapriya Ramesh Kumar won both the singles and doubles titles at the ATF U-16 junior ranking tennis tournament in Agartala. In the singles final, Padmapriya defeated top seed Niesha Enja of Telangana 6-4, 6-4. In the doubles final, Padmapriya, partnering Arnavi Debnath, defeated Avni Punaganti and Vaidehi Shinde 6-1, 6-2.

ROUND-UP

Peeyush, Adithi win: Peeyush Tripathy and Adithi Sushanth clinched top honours in the boys' and girls' U-17 categories at the State Sub-Junior Ranking badminton tournament in Vijayapura.

Results (finals, B'luru Urban unless mentioned): U-17: Boys: Peeyush Tripathy bt Dylan P Thokchom 21-19, 10-21, 21-17. **Doubles:** Mehul Manav Arulmurugan/Satvik S Prabhu (DK) bt Chirag Prakash/Niketan Hari 15-21, 21-19, 21-18. **Girls:** Adithi Sushanth bt Keerthi Balaji 21-18, 21-16. **Doubles**: Disha Ravi Bhat/Tanvi Munoth bt Raksha N/Shriya Joshi 21-11, 21-13. **Mixed doubles:** Eswar Sai Katam/Deborah John bt Chirag Prakash/Tanvi Munoth 21-17, 21-16. **U-15: Boys**: Gautham S Nair bt Yashwardhan SR (Blr Rural) 21-12, 21-19. **Doubles:** Chetas Mundargi/Vishal D Anandh (Kdg) bt Gautham/Siddharth S Nair 14-21 21-14 21-16. **Girls**: Mahitha Naidu Surisetty bt Smriti S 21-10, 21-7. **Doubles:** Hamsa Muralidhara/Mahitha bt Jeevikah Sai Rajeshkumar/Manika Naveen (Blr Rural) 21-18, 21-15. **Mixed doubles:** Yashvardhan SR/Adithi Sushanth (Blr Rural) bt Vishal Uthappa/Hansika Rakesh (Mys) 21-11, 21-16.

K'taka prevail: Karnataka defeated Rajasthan 87-46 in the 76th Junior National Basketball Championship in Puducherry. **K'taka result: Men: Gp B:** Karnataka 87 (Samath Manur 26, Vijayeendra Vedanthi 20, Harshan Yatish 11) bt Rajasthan 46 (Muhammed Raza Khan 12, Manish Kumar Maal 10).

Vanguards cruise: Bangalore Vanguards beat Devanga Union 71-27 in the State 'B' division basketball league championship for men in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Results (League phase): Mandya 68 (Amartya 16, Shashank Gowda 16) bt IBBC 56 (Rahul 14, Sanath 10) HT 36-40; DK dist 65 (Prastik Kumar 30, Deekshit 13) bt B'lore Sporting 52 (Ayush 13, Joe 12) HT: 30-37; B'lore Vanguards 71 (Vedant 10) bt Devanga Union 27 (Nishchal 11) HT: 42-11; HBR BC 84 (Vinoth 26, Sanketh 22) bt Koramangala SC 69 (Nishanth 17, Priyanshu 14) HT: 39-45. TNN

Ankitha stars for City Gymkhana

Bengaluru: Ankitha G's incredible five-wicket haul led City Gymkhana to an eight-wicket win against Neptune CC in the KSCA Senior Women's T20 tournament here recently.

Brief scores: Neptune CC: 71 in 18 overs (Ankitha G 5-7) lost to **City Gymkhana: 72/2 in 9.2 overs** (Divya Gnanananda 24). **Friends Union CC (2): 153/3 in 20 overs** (Angelica Pinto 42, Tejaswini Kumar 54; Hamsinee Arun 2-16) lost to **Minerva CC: 154/7 in 20 overs** (Hamsinee Arun 56 n.o; Shreesha RS 2-23). **Sir Syed Cricketers: 139/2 in 20 overs** (Kashvi Shekar 61 n.o) bt **Century Cricketers: 123/6 in 20 overs** (Thanmayi R 49; Aarushi Anand Sutar 2-26). **Bharath CC: 128/6 in 20 overs**

SENIOR WOMEN'S T20

(Sheetal Santosh 65; Nithya 3-30, Swati Karant 2-16) lost to **Young Lions Club: 130/1 in 16.3 overs** (Pranathi KS 63 n.o, Ishita Singh 39 n.o). **Bangalore Occasionals: 92/9 in 20 overs** (Raashi S 26; Harshitha K 3-9) lost to **Vijaya CC: 94 for no loss in 6.3 overs** (Mansi More 72 n.o). **Coles CC: 178/6 in 20 overs** (Stuthi M 56, Mansi Pundeer 50 n.o; Tanisha Kamat 2-29, Lakshmi Lakkond 2-23, Harini R 2-37) bt **Bangalore SC: 97/7 in 20 overs**. **South End SC: 225/2 in 20 overs** (Nishikha Charvi 49, Monica Patel 40, Aditi R 94 n.o) bt **Jayanagar United Cricketers: 86/5 in 20 overs** (Pranjal 41). TNN

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Bruno Fernandes named Premier League Player of the Season, becomes Man United's first player to win the award since Nemanja Matic

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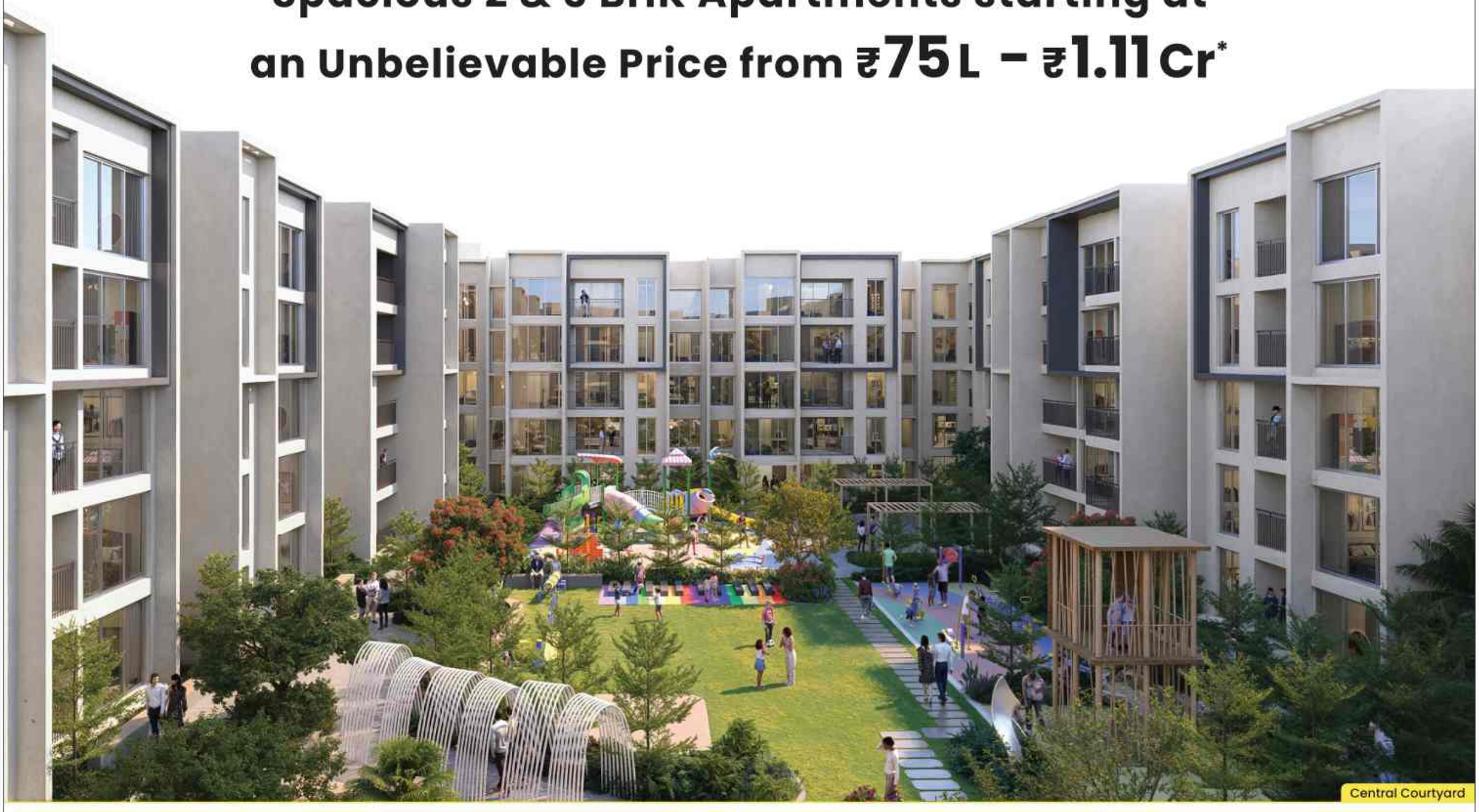
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13. Outdoor Co-Working Space
14. Maze Garden
15. Musical Garden
16. Amphitheatre

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17 Sensory Walk
18. Skating Rink
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20. Play Mound
21. Kid's Play Area
22. Outdoor Rock Climbing Wall
23. Interactive Floor Games
24. Toddler's Play Area
25. Tot-Lot

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29. Outdoor Gym
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33. Cricket Practice Net

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36. Pool Volley Ball
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39. Splash Pad / Interactive Fountain
40. Sunken Seating
41. Cabana
42. Poolside Cinema
43. Spa & Saloon

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FEATURES & ENTERTAINMENT
44. Multipurpose Hall with Pantry
45. Minitheatre

INDOOR GAMES
46. Table Tennis
47. Billiard Table
48. Subsoccer
49. Indoor Mini Golf
50. Air Hockey
51. Video Games & Vr Game Area
52. Foosball
53. Board Games Area

FITNESS & WELLBEING
54. Gym
55. Yoga / Aerobics

KIDS PLAY AREA
56. Ball Pool With Slide
57. Rock Climbing Wall
58. Creche

CO-WORKING SPACE
59. Conference Room
60. Co-Working Space
61. Learning Centre

TERRACE
62. Sky Cinema
63. Star Gazing
64. Terrace Hangout Plaza

CONVENIENCE
65. Ironing Shop
66. Convenio Store
67. Car Charging Bay
68. Air Filling Station
69. Car Washing Bay

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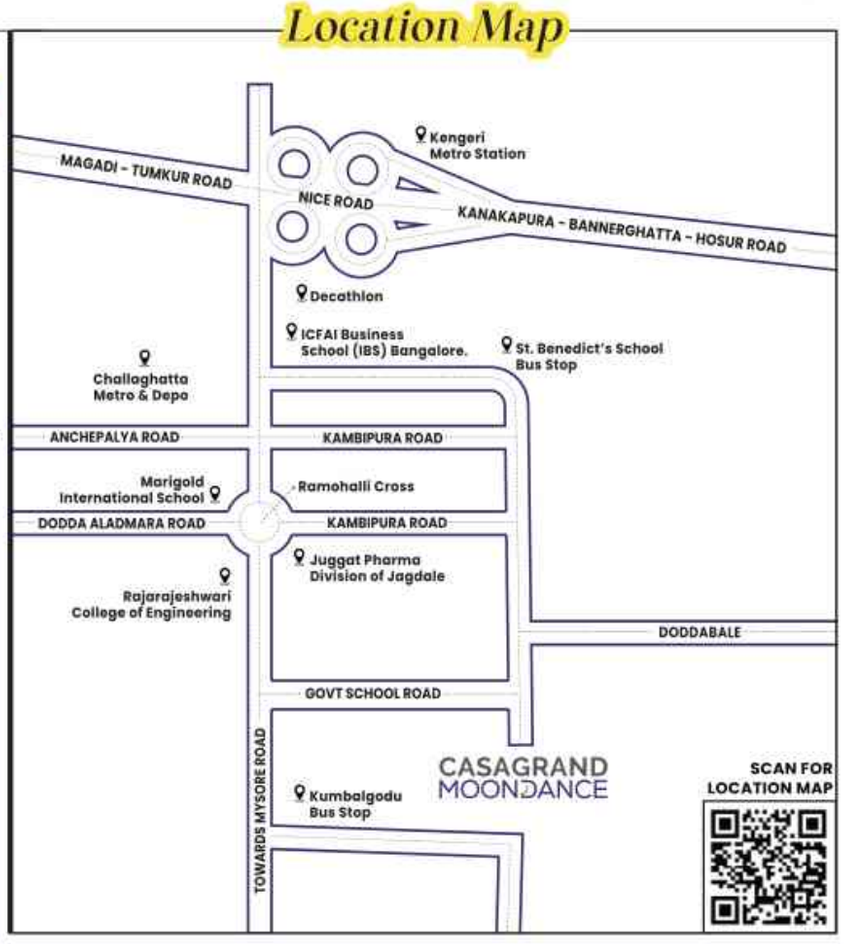
Rajarajeshwari Hospital	7 mins
Don Bosco Institute	8 mins
NICE Road Junction	10 mins
RV College Belt	15 mins
Global Tech Park	15 mins
Gopalan Arcade Mall	18 mins

Location Map



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